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JULY

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Philip MacDonald
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Gary Russell
Production
Julie Pickering
Mark Irvine
Marketing & Promotions
Yvonne Taylor
Chris McCormack
Advertising
Gemini Media Sales Ltd
(01273) 333446

Art Director
Helen Nally
Editorial Director
Paul Neary
Executive Director
Caroline Aubrey
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Mike Hobson
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for Hammer Film Productions
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Hammer Horror

the films that made the Hammer Horror name



Those who prefer to watch their favourite films unedited, extended, or in their original aspect ratios, have traditionally been poorly served by television. Unless, of course, they are Hammer enthusiasts.

Channel 4 has already given us Scope versions of *The Devil-Ship Pirates* and *She*, as well as a widescreen presentation of *The Reptile* - all films presently unavailable in their original formats. Satellite channel Bravo has gone one further. The recent 'Christopher Lee - Unmasked and Dangerous' season came complete with fascinating introductions from the man himself. Hot on the heels of this comes the news that Bravo has purchased the 1980 series *Hammer House of Horror* for screening this summer. For those who missed them first time round, the thirteen episodes are pure essence of Hammer and well worth watching.

The video distributors, on the other hand, just don't seem to be coming up with the goods. Although Lumiere had the best intentions, an edited version of their widescreen *Dracula Prince of Darkness* recently slipped through the net, disappointing those who'd hoped to see the uncensored version of Barbara Shelley's staking. I was dismayed to learn that Warner Brothers' forthcoming series of horror videos includes prints of films such as *Taste the Blood of Dracula* and *The Wicker Man* that are significantly shorter than those recently screened on television. Where films have been lost, or extra footage is difficult to trace, a compromise is acceptable. But where there have been such high-profile precedents with such important films, it is unfortunate that we're being denied the opportunity to watch them as they were intended to be seen.

Hammer's history has been plagued by censorship problems. It's sad that, as their work finds a new audience on video, little seems to have changed.

Marcus Hearn
Editor

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Back to the Old Haunt

The biggest news of recent weeks was Christopher Lee's return to Bray Studios for the recording of a new documentary. Alan Barnes was there...



As yet another aeroplane rocketing out of Heathrow drowns out the sound of his voice, Christopher Lee raises his eyes heavenward and prepares for a second take. What with the noise from the flightpath directly overhead, the regular chuffing of boats passing along the banks of the rural Thames, and the incessant chirping of birdsong, it's a wonder anyone would choose to make movies in such a place. But they do, and they did. For we're at Down Place, Bray Studios, Berkshire, Hammer's famed House of Horror. And it's not terribly quiet. "We had it thirty-seven years ago," murmurs Lee, "and it hasn't changed..."

The reason for Mr Lee's return on this bright April afternoon, some thirty years after shooting his last Hammer to be made at this complex, is his hosting of a forthcoming *American* video documentary, *One Hundred Years of Horror*. Helming the project is the wiry and effusive Ted Newsom, also responsible for last year's Hammer commemoration, *Flesh and Blood*. *One Hundred Years*, as its title suggests, stretches its bounds considerably further, condensing into a planned two hours a century's worth of celluloid terror. Footing the bill for this celebration are Passport International Productions; included will be a wealth of clips and archive material (including rarely-seen interviews with Bela Lugosi, Carroll Borland and John Carradine), plus contributions from such luminaries as Roger Corman, Sam Arkoff, many of the Hammer 'family', and descendants of the Universal greats (Sarah

Karloff, Ron Chaney, Bela Lugosi Jr). "Anybody who's anybody in the genre," promises producer/director Newsom.

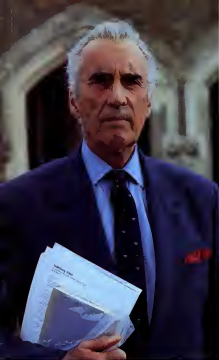
So here we are at Bray, as Lee revisits many of the spots around the main house once pressed into service as the background for many classic Hammer scenes – the colonnade and French windows he crashed through in *The Mummy*, the Baron's garret skylight in *The Curse of Frankenstein*. (He also

The last Hammer movie to be shot at Bray was *The Hound of the Baskinville* in 1978. Lee and Newsom are seen here in 1998.

Christopher Lee and Ted Newsom at Bray Studios.

Photographs by Robin Richard, TTL





steps next door by the very familiar frontage of Oakley Court, as seen in *The Reptile* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.) Lee's bridging commentary is well-researched and witty; between takes, he fills in the blanks, informing the crew of the correct pronunciation of 'Tutankhamun', the habits of Papa 'Doc' Duvalier and the Tonton Macoute, the nuances of Castilian Spanish. Urbane and knowledgeable, his voice is – impossibly – even more resonant and commanding in the flesh than one might imagine.

"It was very emotional," Christopher Lee told us when work on the documentary was completed. "The day was full of memories. Some very happy memories and some very sad ones, so far as so many of the people who were all a part of Hammer's success have gone."

"The places that were so familiar to me are now, as far as I can see, being used for totally different purposes. When I went inside, I said to the woman who runs the studio, 'Do you see that little corridor, the one that leads out to the garden? That was one of our sets.' She couldn't believe it!"

Newsom hopes to work with Lee again, possibly on an in-development project documenting the stormy relationship between Dracula creator Bram Stoker and renowned theatrical actor Henry Irving, long thought to have been parodied by Stoker in his description of the Count. For now, however, he has a formidable editing job in cutting together *One Hundred Years of Horror*. With the perfect host in the form of the incandescent Lee, the omens, it must be said, are very good indeed. †

My Top Ten

Denis Melick, author of the forthcoming *A History of Horrors: The Rise and Fall of the House of Hammer*, is cast away on our Imaginary desert island.



1. *The Two Faces of Dr Jekyll*

Unerrated, misunderstood, and cut to pieces on both sides of the pond – Hammer's most ambitious Gothic is a rich and elegant study of Victorian social mores. The film's lack of a transformation scene left critics of the opinion that there was nothing else of value – wrong: a vibrant musical score, Jack Asher's usual lush photography, Christopher Lee's second-best performance for Hammer (his best being *To the Devil... a Daughter*), and the most literate script the company ever filmed. Then there's that snake-dance!

2. *Quatermass 2*

Brian Donlevy powers his way through the rôle of Quatermass with his trenchant unruffled. Val Guest's direction and James Bernard's apocalyptic score give the film's doomsday scenario a relentless, kinetic energy. With its clipped dialogue and frenetic pacing, Q2 is as engaging today as when it was first shown. An absolute stunner.

3. *The Brides of Dracula*

The best of the Hammer Draculas: a nightmarish fairy-tale set in a Grimm, Gothic landscape of 'magic and devilry.' A blond Dorian Gray vampire with an Oedipus complex meets an ascetic Van Helsing with an armoury of holy artefacts in Budapest. Highly-coloured collision of the old and the new – Hammer horror's finest hour.

4. *Never Take Sweets From a Stranger*

A powerful and riveting film about a community harbouring a child molester. Unfairly castigated on release because it came from an exploitation company – Hammer – but John Hunter's script doesn't put a foot wrong in dealing with a difficult subject. It also features one of the best and most understated shock scenes in any Hammer psycho-thriller, as the two girls come face to face with their aged nemesis on the bank of a river.

5. *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*

From the head-bopping opening sequence (conducted to the wistful lament of a zither) to the precision staging of the fiery finale, this is archetypal Hammer horror. The best of the series by far – a dubious rape scene and some avoidable brutality notwithstanding. Has definitely improved with age.

6. *The Quatermass Experiment*

The start of it all – and it's easy to see why. Richard Wordsworth's Caroon is still an unsettling creation with his taut flesh, fixed stare and barely-concealed rictus grin, hinting at some unimaginable horror. The cleverness of the film is its ambivalence about which 'monster' is the more frightening: Caroon or Quatermass, whose cold intellect and obsessive pursuit of scientific knowledge recognise no moral boundaries.

7. *The Devil Rides Out*

A great villain in Charles Gray (who would go on to play Ernst Stavro Blofeld in *Diamonds Are Forever*), a faithful adaptation by one of the best writers in the genre, humour, horror, and fine ensemble playing.

8. *Captain Clegg*

Grand, riotous fun in wicked old Dymchurch: skeletal riders, midnight exhumations, bleeding scarecrows, strange comings-and-goings – and lots of sharp implements finding their messy marks. Cashing on top form, and loving every minute of it. Scary, sad, splendid Hammer bummer.

9. *The Damned*

Cool, dispassionate, yet elegiac look at the inevitable end of civilisation as we knew it. Lyrical dialogue from Evan Jones, careful direction from Joseph Losey, brutally stark monochrome photography from Arthur Genta. A bleak and uncompromising vision.

10. *Hell Is a City*

A gritty, no-nonsense thriller that perfectly encapsulates the look and feel of the period and place in which it was made (late fifties Manchester). Only spoiled by having to pull its punch in respect of the extra-marital dalliance on which Stanley Baker's Chief Inspector Martineau really should have embarked!

Satanic Writes

Send your letters to:
Satanic Writes,
Hammer Horror,
Marvel Comics Ltd.,
Arundel House,
13/15 Arundel Street,
London WC2R 3DX.

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Full addresses will only be printed if specially requested.

I was born in 1959. For my generation Hammer was horror. Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Ingrid Pitt... the excitement goes on and on. I vividly remember the first time I ever saw a fright film. I was seven or eight years old and my parents dropped me off at the local cinema on a Saturday afternoon. I saw *Dracula Prince of Darkness*, *The Reptile* and *The Plague of the Zombies* all in the same triple feature. Needless to say I was up most of the night, unable to sleep. From that time on, I have watched and read anything and everything I could find connected with Hammer films - so keep up the good work.

Steven M Kanasz,
USA

It's always good to hear readers' reminiscences of formative Hammer experiences - although I don't know what your parents thought they were doing letting you see that particular triple bill at such a tender age! Now, while we're on the subject of *Dracula Prince of Darkness*...

Adverts in your magazine state that the widescreen version of *Dracula Prince of Darkness* available on Lumiere Video is the "uncut Hammer classic". Well, I am writing to say that this version is not uncut - there is a small piece missing.

I am referring to the scene where Father Sandoz puts a stake through the vampirised Helen's heart. Last year Tyne Tees TV showed the film, and there was a shot of the stake going in, followed by blood coming from the wound. This shot does not appear in either the widescreen or the pan-and-scan version of *Prince of Darkness*.

I buy films because, in theory, it's better than seeing them on TV - no adverts every half hour, no voice-over man, and nothing missing that might be unsuitable for television audiences. So it's very annoying to discover that I could have taped the televised version for next to nothing, rather than pay for an incomplete version. Do you know why the television version should have more than the official home video?

Maurice Dixon,
Stockton-on-Tees,
Cleveland

To answer Maurice's queries, and the many others we've received on this subject, we can only say that, regrettably, we couldn't warn you because we were unaware until after the product was released that Lumiere's print was a version censored years ago. Cats were actually made to three sequences - Kleeve's resurrection of the Count, the staking of Helen by Father Sandoz, and the scene where Dracula compels the mesmerised Diana to drink his blood. The full American print does indeed occasionally appear on television, but sadly we've yet to see it on video.

Can you please answer three questions for me:

1. How many films have Hammer made?
2. Is *The Curse of the Werewolf* going to be available on video?

3. Is Hammer responsible for a film called *The House that Bleed* or *The House that Dripped Blood*? I can vaguely remember a film from long ago about blood oozing through the walls and stairs.

Thank you - and keep up the good work.

Martin Camilleri,
Surrey

Your first question is a very popular one in our mailbox. As far as we can accurately ascertain, a grand total of 161 feature films were released by Hammer between 1935 and 1979. Not all of these were horror films, of course - Hammer's legacy embraces numerous other genres as diverse as historical swashbucklers and On the Beach spin-offs. In addition to its full-length films, Hammer operated as an associate on various other pictures and also produced a number of short features including musicals and travelogues. Of course, this doesn't even begin to address the various television series. We are currently compiling a definitive Hammer filmography to be published later this year.

Good news on *The Curse of the Werewolf*. The film is currently scheduled for release by Warner Brothers Home Video this coming September.

As for your final query, the answer is more complicated than it might initially seem. First of all, yes, there is a movie called *The House that Dripped Blood*, produced not by Hammer but by Amicus. This 'horror' picture was released in 1970 and featured a fine cast including Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Denholm Elliott, Ingrid Pitt and Jon



Perrowe. However, we suspect you are actually thinking of an episode of the 1980 television anthology series *Hammer House of Horror*. Entitled *The House that Bleed to Death*, this hour-long chiller starred Nicholas Ball, Rachel Davies and Brian Croucher in the tale of a family who discover that their new house was once the scene of a terrible murder. The climax does indeed feature blood pouring from draperies and seeping through the walls.

Regarding your ongoing discussion of Hammer's coloured front-of-house stills (*Hammer Horror* Issue 3) I feel these were selected black-and-white press stills from which the publicity department made a 10" x 8" master transparency, which was then hand-tinted. The stills weren't printed on photographic paper, which was very expensive in Hammer's early days. The black-and-white press stills consisted of two different batches, the individual portraits are staged shots taken by John Jay, who handled a special photographic sitting for each star. About 200 to 300 5" x 4" negatives were taken for each film, with sets prepared for various countries around the world.

While the movie was actually being filmed, stills photographer Tom Edwards would take the set shots.

Again between 200 and 300 2 1/2" negatives were prepared. Because, for obvious reasons, these were shot from different perspectives than the actual film cameras, they often reveal interesting details of the wonderful sets, props and costumes. This is one of the reasons why they are highly sought after by Hammer collectors the world over.

Michael A Brooks,
Boson,
Lancashire

I am writing in response to Alan Barnes's criticism of the Dracula Experience Society's *The Demeter Magazine* [Hammer Horror Issue 4]. Although many of his comments are spot-on (ie many of the articles are "flimsy" and "unlikely to be of much interest outside the society") there is a very good reason for this. As the magazine is more or less simply a newsletter for our society (and consequently is unavailable to non-members), it is not designed for a general readership. I can assure you, however, that we are constantly trying to improve *The Demeter* and, in spite of the problems with seemingly flimsy typesetters and printers, our next issue will be something very special indeed.

One thing I must relate quite vehemently though is the allegation that we are a "Goth bunch". Although many members are indeed of that persuasion, the majority of us are simply "vampirephiles". Obviously we also all enjoy certain Hammer films and some of us appear to like your magazine too, even if your first three issues were filled with something similar to "Dogs Meat" in a recent member's survey.

Issue Four of *Hammer Horror* has been the best so far and seemed to be far less self-conscious (ie full of self-congratulatory bragging and boasting than previous instalments). I am quite looking forward to the next issue.

Dr BRUCE BOND,
Newbury,
Berkshire

My congratulations to everyone concerned with *Hammer Horror* magazine for doing a first-rate job. The content and layout are spot-on, containing the right mix of the old and the new. But what really makes the magazine special is the theming of each issue to a particular Hammer film. I trust that there are no future plans to change this approach!

In previous letters pages I've noticed people mentioning a *Hammer Horror Collectors' Special* which preceded the magazine. Unfortunately, I missed this publication. Do you have copies available or do I have to start hunting around specialist shops?

Returning to the seventies for a moment, I'd like to see an article on the original *House of Hammer* magazine of that time. I was a subscriber and have (as far as I am aware) all 23 issues that were published.

Finally, you started Issue 1, appropriately enough, with *The Curse of*

Frankenstein - so when are we going to get *Dracula*? Logically speaking, it should have been in Issue 2!

Neil Parfitt,
Belling,
Lancashire

We've received dozens of letters requesting information about back issues in general - and the Collectors' Special in particular. We were totally overwhelmed by the initial demand for our Collectors' Special, and the edition is now completely sold out. So unfortunately the only recourse on that score is to specialist outlets and second-hand markets. Back issues of Issue 1, 2, 3 and 4 are, however, available at £3.50 per issue for UK orders, and £4.50 for overseas orders. These prices include all postage and packing. Telephone MRM Ltd on (01853) 410510 for details.

There were indeed 28 editions of *The House of Hammer*, created by Dea Skinn and published by Quality, although it had undergone two changes of title by the time it reached its final issue in 1978.

The Count himself returns next month in his 1968 manifestation, as for Hammer's original *Dracula*, it's waiting its turn among our ongoing pile of vampires, werewolves, mummies and dinosaurs.

If you are a keen or regular viewer of horror films then I'd like you to help in a research project I am undertaking at the University of Stirling Film and Media Department.

The project is concerned with horror film audiences and in particular women who watch horror films - how they watch, how they react, what they think about the films, their opinions on the genre. In most cases, a predominantly male horror film audience is assumed, but there are many women who do watch (and enjoy) such films: I am one of them. This is a serious and scholarly investigation which will form part of the research for my PhD, and is not intended for publication other than in submission for this degree.

If you are a woman who, however infrequently, watches horror films (it doesn't have to be at the cinema - on video or TV counts as well), I'd like you to write to me about your interests and thoughts on the horror genre. I will supply you with a questionnaire as part of this study.

Men are not excluded either, I'd like to hear about your experiences taking women to see horror films, and I also have a questionnaire for you.

Please write to me requesting a questionnaire at the following address:

Bridget Cherry (Ms),
Department of Film and Media Studies,
University of Stirling,
Stirling,
FK9 4LA

or e-mail
TOPPS22@YAHOO!-WHITLAC.UK

Obituaries



"I was with regret that we learned of Eric Porter's death on the 15th May at the age of 67. One of our most respected and admired actors, he made his first stage appearance in February 1945, going on to work with Donald Wolfit and, in the 1960s, taking a key position in the newly-born Royal Shakespeare Company. Courtless stage, television and film appearances followed; in recent years he was Moriarty to Jeremy Brett's Sherlock Holmes, brilliantly capturing the slow, "curiously reptilian" head movements described by Conan Doyle, and a memorable Fagin in the BBC's 1983 *Oliver Twist*. By television audiences he will perhaps be best remembered, however, as the formidable paterfamilias Sooties in the BBC's classic 1967 serial *The Forsyte Saga*.

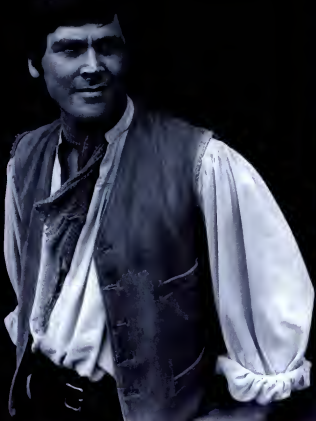
Among his films were *The Heroes of Telemark*, *Anthony and Cleopatra*, *The Day of the Jackal* and *Don Sharp's* 1978 version of *The Thirty-Nine Steps*. For Hammer he made two pictures - *The Lost Continent* and *Hans of the Ripper* - playing the lead in both. "Eric Porter is an incredible man to work with," said his *Hans of the Ripper* co-star Angharad Rees in 1971. "You just have to look into those eyes."

Sir Michael Hordern only appeared in one Hammer production, but that is more than enough reason to add our voice to the many tributes which have appeared since his sad death on the 2nd May at the age of 83. To say that he was one of our greatest actors would be to reaffirm the obvious: to list only a handful of his credits, from prestigious theatre work ranging from *Shakespeare* to *Stoppard*, to television serials as diverse as *Middlemarch*, *Paddington Bear* and *Paradise Postponed* and movies like *Gandhi*, *Sink the Bismarck!* and *I Was Moriarty's Double* would be merely to skim the surface of the richest of careers. In the horror genre his performances dignified a number of classy productions: for Hammer he made a memorable appearance wielding a burning crucifix in 1972's *Demons of the Mind*. Other work in the genre included *Theatre of Blood*, *The Medusa Touch* and *The Hour of Thirteen*. He will be greatly missed.



Heady Days

Röles in *Frankenstein Created Woman* and *Quatermass and the Pit* secured Robert Morris a reputation as one of Hammer's most memorable young stars. He shares some memories with Jonathan Rigby.



"Irene Lumb, the casting director, arranged for me to go down to Bury and meet up with Terry Fisher and Tony Nelson Keys," recalls Robert Morris of his first contact with Hammer. "This was only a couple of weeks at most prior to filming on *Frankenstein Created Woman*. The knack in interviews is not to let the director talk, because what they want to see is your personality and whether it fits the rôle. With young directors, they're very often quite embarrassed by the whole process so they just sit down and laboriously explain the plot to you, which means that they're talking all the time and not you. But Terry, of course, was highly experienced so he went out of his way to get me talking. They'd sent me the script to read in advance, and not having long left RADN, I was very much into motivations and sub-text and all that. So when they asked me what I thought about the character, I went into this long, involved thing about why my character, Hans, acted the way he did. Irene told me afterwards that, once I'd gone, Terry had turned to Tony and said, 'Bloody hell – did we think of all that?'"

He roars with laughter at the memory. "I think that's one of the reasons I got the part, actually – I seemed to be very much 'into' it!" Having seen the film again recently, Robert tries to piece together, at a distance of almost thirty years, something of his approach to the character, which is certainly one of Hammer's more intriguing juvenile

leads. "Watching the video, I thought: What has happened to him since that childhood shock of seeing his father's head cut off? Once he's grown up, where has he been, and who has brought him up? And why is he still within this community that executed his father? These are the things that you can't really 'square' when it comes to characterisation. But one had to make it all logical to oneself, the basic thing being that, with his father an executed murderer, he was obviously a bit of an outcast in the village. And so was Christina – because of her deformities – so it was quite natural that they should be drawn to each other. The bedroom

"The bedroom scene was a little grotesque, I thought: the idea of this young man being fascinated by this rather gruesome young lady was rather freakish."

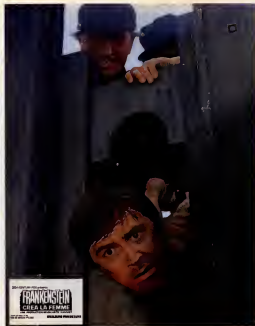
scene was a little grotesque, I thought: the idea of this young man being fascinated by this rather gruesome young lady was rather freakish. But that childhood shock must have been immense... Well, you'd be traumatised for life, wouldn't you? And probably unable to function as a reasonable human being thereafter! And in that trial scene he was certainly pretty naïve." He mimes holding up a jacket and slips expertly into the gravelly tones of Peter Madden's Police Chief.

"Do you recognise this coat?" He breaks up with laughter again. "Terry, I think, had his tongue in his cheek a lot of the time. But you had to take it seriously when you were actually doing it. The moment you started sending it up it'd fall to pieces."

Born in Gosport, near Portsmouth, into a military family, Robert spent his childhood travelling from one posting to another, and at fifteen joined

up himself. "The army was the only life I knew, but after three years in the Boys' Service I saw the Yeovil Amateur Operatic Society do *Bitter Sweet* and I suddenly realised there was a life beyond the army. So I saved like crazy for a further three years to amass the vast sum of £200 to buy myself out of the army." After a spell behind the stalls bar of Portsmouth's Theatre Royal, he became an assistant stage manager there at £6 a week. He ended up as the last, and almost certainly the youngest, manager of the Grand Theatre, Southampton, and then spent six months in London's West End stage-managing Anthony Quayle and Celia Johnson in *Chin Chin*. Quayle helped him out with his RADA audition pieces - "I can't think of any other drama school applicant who had as distinguished a coach as Tony Quayle!" - and in 1963 he emerged from RADA to find himself typed in 'nasty, rich young man parts'. "I did one in the old *Z Cars* - that went out live... very nerve-wracking! - and thereafter I got a lot of similar offers. I was very purist in those days - 'I want to play all parts!' I said to myself - so I went to do a season at £16 a week at the Phoenix Theatre in Leicester, with Tony Hopkins and others." Among these was his good friend the late Victor Henry, and Robert provides a tragic postscript to last month's feature on *The Sorcerers*, in which Henry played Ian Dgilly's red-headed sidekick Alan. "Victor had quite a reputation for his work at the Royal Court in *The Knack* and other plays of that type, but he was a bit of a tearaway. He was a very hard drinker and he'd go to all the clubs - taking me with him on several occasions - and if the evening ended in a fight, then that was a good night out as far as he was concerned. Eventually he got beaten up at a bus stop early one morning, suffered brain damage and sank into a coma for several years, from which he never emerged."

Robert's introduction to Hammer came in the summer of 1966. Does he agree with Francis Matthews's contention that 'There was a great snob thing about them then. You didn't tell people you were doing them'? "No, no. I was delighted to get it - I told everybody! After all, I'd got my first film, apart from a little one I don't really talk about."



My agent, Jean Diamond, was a pretty big agent and she was very keen for me to do it. Because, let's face it, if you cocked it up it wouldn't be a disaster, and it was a very good way of getting some experience with a film camera. Hammer were very good like that. They gave a lot of English actors their first crack at film work. A lot of the people above me at RADA, I'd noticed, would leave and go straight into a Hammer horror.

Of course for Hammer I suppose we had the added attraction, being relatively inexperienced, of being cheap! But they were very sympathetic to the young actors. They were very much a family outfit. In fact, and people like Thorley Walters and the chap who played my father - Duncan Lament - would turn up in film after film. I met Thorley several times afterwards, and he remained very much in demand. He worked right up to his death, really. He became a little difficult and slightly cantankerous - he was very elderly, after all - but he still delivered the goods."

Given an account of the miserable fate that befell his Austrian co-star, Susan Denberg, Robert is visibly dismayed. "She was very sweet, very friendly, I liked her very much. She was very mixed up with that rather fast Polanski crowd, and also very much into the drug scene. She'd often arrive on the set in the mornings somewhat the worse for wear, but she was no trouble really. Her accent was pretty thick, mind you, and they decided to make out that Christina and her father were not natives of the village, so the





father had to adopt an accent to match hers. Later, when they realised they'd have to dub her after all, Alan MacNaughton had to go in and dub himself back into standard English!

"They put her up in a very posh flat in St James's, where she threw this big bash one night which I was invited to.

Sidney Poitier was there and loads of others – it was quite incredible, like a mini-Hollywood really.

She was very well connected, but she threw it all away. I remember this publicity guy telling me that,

after the *Frankenstein* picture, the company she was under contract to – whether it was *Wormers* or not I can't remember – couldn't find her anywhere.

She'd simply disappeared, so they asked this publicity guy to find her. He eventually tracked her down to some flat in

Earl's Court – big black guy answers the door – and inside there's Susan, completely spaced out. They were frantic to get hold of her for some new

project, but she blew it entirely. But then you have to ask yourself whether she would have made it big anyway. There were so many

talented and beautiful American actresses around... The competition would have been very fierce."

On a lighter note, Robert hoots with laughter once more when he

recalls the film's most intimate scene.

"I don't know whether there'd been

"I don't know whether there'd been any nude bedroom scenes before that. I was never sure whether we introduced nudity to horror or horror to nudity!"

We had chairs made of balsa wood, as was the case that gets broken over my back. They undercranked it slightly – speeding up the film to

make the fight look more dynamic – and I was pleased to see that they

didn't overdo that effect. Sometimes, particularly in action films, they

undercrank it too much and it becomes 'Cartoon Time'. It was a good set to do it in, of course, with

lots of tables and chairs to smash up. They were

pleased that the scene went according to schedule... We didn't need many re-takes, so

not too many replacement chairs were required! I haven't worked with any of those other lads since:

I haven't even seen any of them socially. Peter [Blythe] I'd worked with before, in a Doris Lessing

TV play filmed at Kingsway, but never since. We all look so young,

though. That's the trouble with looking at these films again – you think, 'My God! Not a wrinkle in sight!' It can be a little depressing!"

Robert remembers the West End press preview of the film, along with its support feature, *The Mummy's Shroud*. "They actually had a buffet

afterwards where the casts of both films were plonked down with all these hand-bitten journalists. Peter Cushing and Terry and Tony Keys

were all there, though I don't remember

any nude bedroom scenes before that. I was never sure whether we introduced nudity to horror or horror to nudity! But it was extremely discreet by later standards... One had one's briefs on, though Susan was all for taking everything off. It was my first experience of such a scene and, of course, they cleared the set as far as possible, but in fact it was more amusing than embarrassing. The cameramen would delicately lift my right arm into position over her left breast, so you couldn't see the nipple, and of course one's stuck there and one doesn't move a muscle. It was most enjoyable!

Terry Fisher was lovely. He didn't say a lot on the set, but whenever you brought something to the part – did something with it – he was always

appreciative and would say, 'Oh yes, I like that, keep it in.' I've worked with some very intransigent

directors in my time but Terry was always sensitive to what you were doing, and if he

thought you were wrong, he would tell you. Of course, he had quite a reputation for these

Hammer horrors. Some of his films were regarded as classics of the genre, but one had no inkling of

that at the time, because he didn't have that aura about him. He just got on with the job.

"One bit which was very efficiently handled was the fight scene, which works very well, I think.





Above: With costars Peter Cushing and Timothy Dalton. "I've never heard anyone say an unkind word about Peter Cushing, because you can't." Below: Robert Morris today



"The funniest moment was at the end," Robert remembers, "with the head stuck on the bedpost and when, later on, Christina talks to it in my voice."

much about the support film: I was too busy waiting for the main feature! The funniest moment was at the end, with the head stuck on the bedpost and when, later on, Christina talks to it in my voice. That got a big laugh at the preview, I remember, and I found it hilariously funny – I just fell about, because I didn't know that was going to happen. The headless body, by the way, wasn't a dummy; it was me. I wasn't scheduled to do it, but everything was going smoothly and they said, "Why don't we use Bob's actual body?" It meant another week's wages for me, since I was called in for three or four days in the sixth week, when they did all the pyrotechnics and laboratory stuff. I just had to lie on a table with my head concealed in a well they'd built into the table, rather as magicians do. It was a typically loud gesture on Hammer's part."

Another kind gesture brought Robert a small role in *Quatermass and the Pit* the following year. "There wasn't really anything in it for me, but they'd liked my work in *Frankenstein Created Woman* so Tony Keys called me in and said, 'There's this Oxford electronics bolton who's written as an elderly gentleman, but we see no reason why he shouldn't be a young bolton.' So I spent about six days on it, spread over a

fortnight. Roy Ward Baker was a nice man – very laconic – and he did a brilliant job, considering the budget. Barbara Shelley was going berserk in the pit amid a forest of wires with men pulling on them out of shot. Nowadays they'd do all that with a computer, but they did it brilliantly, I thought. You couldn't see the wires at all, but I can assure you there were wheel-barrons suspended in mid-air and all sorts of things!"

Robert's subsequent career has been largely spent in television – in such well-remembered shows as *Thriller*, *Dixon of Dock Green*, *Worship*, *Angels*, *The Onedin Line* and *Blaise's 7* – taking in a good spread of the country's major rep theatres on route. But he recalls his Hammer days with special fondness, particularly where Hane's imperious employer is concerned. "I've never heard anyone say an unkind word about Peter Cushing, because you can't – you couldn't possibly. His dedication made me juggle sometimes, because he took it all so very seriously, but he was basically just a lovely man. They all were, in fact, because it really was like a family – they all knew each other, they worked well together, they knew exactly what they were about. And I loved the lunches down at Bray. It was an excellent canteen, and I remember one day looking round and there's everybody in death masks and bloody bandages round their heads – and Susan, of course, with her 'reptile' make-up – all sitting there eating their roast chicken and discussing the price of fish. It was such a ludicrous image..."

He roams with laughter again. "Yes... That was certainly one of the happiest jobs I've ever done."



Hell is a City

One of Hammer's most successful thrillers was released on video in May. Adam Jezard looks at *Hell is a City*, and talks to director Val Guest.

Inquisitor Matthews
Tom Stirling
John Hawkins
John Robinson
Sgt. Gurney
Sergeant Steele
Young Savage
Devon
Jackie Little
Clyde Rance
Tanner Jones
Laurie Lovett
Bert Darnley
Brace
Cecily
Commercial Traveller

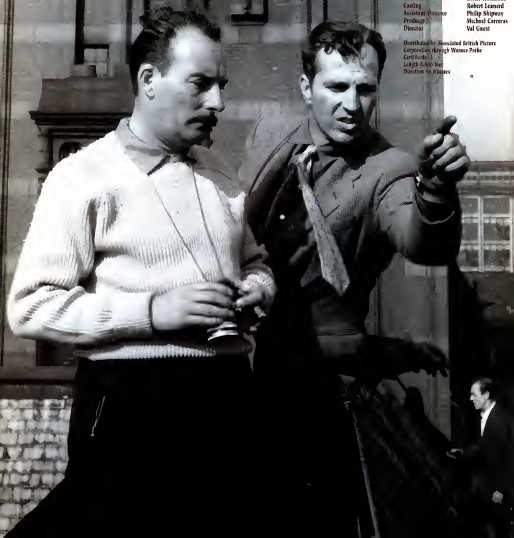
Stanley Baker
John Crawford
Donald Pleasence
Maxine Audley
Billie Whitelaw
Joseph Tomelty
George A. Cooper
Gordiey Frederick
Vanda Godsell
Charles Houston
Judy Blumhard
Charles Morgan
Peter Madden
Dickie Owen
Lois Daine
Warren Mitchell

Screenplay

Val Guest
from a novel by
Maurice Procter
Stanley Black
Arthur Grant
Moray Grant
James Neale
Colin Gedge
Leslie Hammond
Robert Leacock
Philip Shipway
Michael Carreras
Val Guest

Music composed by
Director of Photography
Camera Operator
Supervising Editor
Make-up
Records
Casting
Assistant Director
Producers
Director

Distributed by Associated British Picture
Corporation through Warner-Pinks
Certificate A
Length 8,800 feet
Duration 90 minutes





Background

Based on a novel by former Manchester policeman Maurice Procter and scripted by director Val Guest, *Hell Is a City* was one of the first British films to take a step back from the cosy policeman's world of *Dixon of Dock Green* and portray it as something more disturbing, with a vein of realism which was to become an ingredient of cop dramas everywhere, from *Hill Street Blues* to home-grown series like *Becroft the Lines*.

Procter's novel was chosen as a suitable subject for Hammer by producer Michael Carreras, who approached the reliable Guest to turn it into a film. The plot struck Guest, a former journalist and one-time London editor of *The Hollywood Reporter*, as a fitting subject for the documentary style of film-making which was his trademark at the time.

Costing around £115,000 and combining Manchester location shooting with Elstree studio work, *Hell Is a City* completed production in December 1959. Guest still holds strong feelings about the film: "I think *Hell Is a City* was one of the first films to tackle the subject of the police with the 'you were there' treatment, with no kid gloves. I think in that respect it might have started a minor wave of films treating the police as human beings."

"I always felt that if you were taking a new look at familiar subjects you should present them in a new fashion. You can't do this with all films, but *Hell Is a City*, and some of the other films I made for Hammer at that time, seemed to lend themselves to my cine-verite style of film-making. It was a style I liked to use when approaching that sort of subject, which had reality, and I felt it gave it a little more impact. I tried to do it almost as a semi-documentary, as if we were a newsreel team following the story."

The newsreel approach first fuelled Guest's imagination after he saw Elia Kazan's 1950 movie *Panic in the Streets*, the tale of an outbreak of plague in a modern American city. "It made a lasting impression on me. It had such immediacy and was so stark that you felt you were really in it. The director was brilliant and he changed my whole life when it came to viewing realistic subjects."

Guest's efforts to give *Hell Is a City* a realistic feel took him as far as recruiting members of the public into several scenes. A reporter and photographer from *The Huddersfield Daily Examiner*, both sent to cover the shooting of the film, appear as the two men flagged down by Warren Mitchell's commercial traveller upon his discovery of a corpse on the moor. Later, when 'The Fatted calf' public house was called upon to double as 'The Lacy Arms', Guest dispensed with extras, simply leaving the pub regulars exactly where they were.

As always, Guest plotted his film out on a storyboard before shooting began, just in case there was a hold-up on one scene and another had to be scheduled in its place. "I don't like having to find sudden inspiration if something goes wrong," he explains. "I like to have my sudden inspiration carefully planned."

Stanley Baker was ideally cast as the dogged Inspector Harry Martineau, who predicts that the almost psychotic Don Starling (John Crawford) will return to the big city to recover a hidden hoard of jewels. Forced to spend little time at home thanks to his nagging wife Julia (played by Maxine Audley), Martineau is at the vanguard of police heroes whose domestic lives are a far cry from the orderly laws they aim to enforce. Baker had already worked for Guest and Hammer on the hard-hitting war drama *Yesterday's Enemy* (1959) and, before finding stardom, had played characters as diverse as the milkman in *Exclusive! Clubhouse* (1951) and *Mooded* in the Hollywood epic *Knight of the Round Table* (1954). He became an international figure thanks to a series of tough-guy roles, starting with the cultish leery-driven thriller *Hell Drivers* (1957). He had already been a small-screen star for some time – indeed, he was the original Tom Friend in the BBC television play *The Creature* (1955), written by Nigel Kneale and co-starring Peter Cushing (two years later this was remade for Hammer by Guest as *The Abominable Snowman*, with Forrest Tucker in the Baker rôle). Baker's performance in *Hell Is a City* gives more than a glimpse of the talent which was to make him a worldwide star before his tragically early death in 1976.

Baker had a reputation for being tough and driving himself, and others, hard. "I never had any trouble with him," Guest recalls, "but I think Stanley had a short fuse with people who he didn't think were doing their job properly – for example, if they hadn't learned their lines or something."

Like many British films of the era, *Hell Is a City* featured an American star as its villain. Washington-born John Crawford is probably best known for his rôles in films such as *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1950) and *The 300 Spartans*

The Story

Manchester policeman Harry Martineau learns that Don Starling, whom he put in prison fourteen years before, has escaped after killing a prison officer. What he doesn't know is that Starling has already returned to the city to contact former underworld friends. Before he went to prison, Starling had committed a jewel robbery and hidden the loot, which has not been recovered. He agrees to split it with three friends if they help him commit a further robbery that will enable him to buy a false passport and skip the country. The gang holds up a bookie's clerk taking money to the bank. They drive to the nearby moors to dispose of the getaway car, but during the journey the clerk, a helpless young girl, dies. While hiding the body, the gang is spotted by a passing motorist and they flee. After dividing the money from the robbery, they split up. But the money has been dusted with a chemical which turns the fingers green. Armed with this clue, the dogged Martineau and his sidekick Devery begin scouring the local criminal fraternity in a bid to uncover Starling's hiding place, a hunt which leads to an armed confrontation on the rooftops high above the city...



Left: Director Val Guest (with news) and John Crawford prepare for the chase sequence at the film's climax. Filming took place 200 feet above ground level among the catwalks of Manchester's Refrigo Assurance Company Building.



Above: the long arm of the law catches up with Don Starling (John Crawford)

Right: when Martineau (Stanley Baker) questions Hawkins (Donald Pleasence), the book-maker's counsel becomes self-evident

(1962), as well as for his appearances in *The Wolfen*.

Other notable cast members included Donald Pleasence, making his sole appearance for Hammer, Diana Rigg; Dickie Owen (later to appear in Hammer's *The Curse of the Mummy's Tomb* and *The Mummy's Shroud*) and Lita Doré, who would go on to play Sara Darwin in 1972's *Captain Kronos Vampire Hunter*. Veteran Peter Madden would later be seen in such diverse Hammer productions as *Ros of the Vampire*, *Frankenstein Created Women* and *Noirist and Dearest*.

The dominating Manchester locations, specified in the novel, gave an added boost to the film's gritty quality. The contrast between the untamed moor and the untameable metropolis was something Guest strove for, and he was considerably aided by the grainy black-and-white photography of Arthur Grant, who worked on many classic Hammer movies. "Arthur was my cameraman," Guest recalls. "I had him under personal contract after a while and I used him on *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* [the classic 1962 science-fiction thriller] and many others."

Added authenticity was provided by the police forces of Manchester, Oldham and Huddersfield, whose cooperation even ran to recruiting extras from the ranks during filming. Guest's relationship with the Manchester police was to serve him well. When he came to make his later police thrillers *Pygson* (1962), set in Brighton, and *Eighty Thousand Suspects* (1963), set in Bath, the police authorities in both regions willingly agreed to cooperate with him because of reports they had received about his good rapport with officers in Manchester.

Other touches of local colour include a tense gambling scene in which illegal betting takes place on 'the tossing school', a game peculiar to the North of England. This involves throwing two coins in the air and putting money on which way up they will both land. The hills and houses around the town's more run-down areas provided the backdrop to the gambling den and the chase which ensues when the police raid it.

The movie features a brief moment of nudity from a young Billie Whitelaw (playing the wife of Donald Pleasence's slippery bookmaker Gus Hawkins) during a violent scene in which she is attacked by Starling. Although nudity was rare, even in adult British features of the period, Guest feels sure that no-one would have been alarmed by the small amount of flesh which was unveiled – "unless Billie's husband wasn't! I had shot a lot of nude scenes before and a lot after. I don't think there was anything shocking about it."

Hell Is a City received a charity gala premiere in Manchester, opened by the City's

Police Band, on 10th April 1960. It went on general release 9th May, making its debut Stateside in Pittsburgh on 13th November. Reviews were generally kind – Variety called it "an absorbing film", noting that "Val Guest's taut screenplay... allied to his own deft direction has resulted in a film in which the characters are all vividly alive, the action constantly gripping and the background of a provincial city [sic] put over with authenticity". London's Evening News summed it up as being "violent, first-rate" and "taut."

Such was the impact made by the film's first television screening that Midlands-based ATV approached Hammer about the possibility of a spin-off television series starring Stanley Baker. Throughout 1966 and 1967, producer Michael Carreras and original author Maurice Procter strove to develop the idea into a suitable format, while Hammer welcomed the potential such a series offered to put the recently vacated Ray Studios to good use. When negotiations stalled, the series treatment was offered to ABC and later Screen Gems but, like Carreras's earlier aim to make feature films of the other Inspector Martineau novels, nothing came of the plan.

Aspects of the tough and embittered Martineau resurfaced, however, in Guest's 1980 TV movie, *Dangerous Davies – The Last Detective*, based on the book by Leslie Thomas. Although the film is a comedy, there are moments of

seriousness reminiscent of Guest's earlier film – notably a scene in which Davies (Bernard Cribbins) loses his temper with a murder suspect and beats him up.

"In my films I tried to show the fact that police officers are people, who have moments when they flare and moments when they are quiet, ordinary people," affirms the director. "I never wanted the characters in my police pictures to be all on one level. They should have light and shade, not just go around shooting people and being shot at, nor being a genteel Sherlock Holmes."





The adaptation of films into short comic strips was a common practice of the time. The *Hell is a City* strip came in five instalments and was offered to newspaper editors free of charge.



Critique

Hell is a City is an audacious film. It shows British police officers entering properties without warrants, threatening suspects and even telling one criminal that unless he cooperates an innocent member of his family will be framed as an accessory to robbery and murder. By modern standards – and with the topicality of so many recent miscarriages of justice – this may seem unnecessarily controversial, but Val Guest mixes the elements to create a sympathetic portrayal of a man under pressure to catch crooks even meaner than he is, and it is this which brings the film to life.

Detective Inspector Martineau's domestic life has been neglected because of his work, while the nature of the crimes and the crooks he is dealing with would be enough to corrupt lesser men. But he manages to keep himself from the mire into which he could all too easily slip – although his relationship with barmy lady (Vanda Godsell) indicates that he may be on the downward slope.

Stanley Baker makes an enormous impact as Martineau. Guest extracts a performance full of subtlety, especially in Baker's scenes with Moiré Audley. In a short time the pair convey the impression of an empty, childless marriage, with an acuity which films wholly dedicated to the subject of marital discord have failed to achieve.

Dramatically, John Crawford's Starling is like an evil twin, the antithesis of Martineau. At one point Martineau almost concedes that he could have ended up like the thug, having "gone to the same school and fought in the same war". But Starling is more than just Martineau's criminal reflection – he is a reminder that sometimes the methods used to catch criminals are not so different from those of the crooks themselves. The expression on Martineau's face as his wife reminds him that he detected everything about Starling years that maybe he despises himself too.

Martineau's relationship with his sidekick, Devery (Geoffrey Frederick) is also of interest to fans of the police thriller. Years before Regan and Carter, Morse and Lewis or any of the current crop of TV detective duos, the trend of humorous macho banter between two police heroes, mixed with tough action

In the robbery and the scenes on the moor, the editing creates such tension that you would think you were watching a film shot in Hollywood, not Huddersfield.

when confronting suspects, was well established. *Hell is a City* cannot claim to be the first drama which shows this male bonding relationship between the rakes, but it nonetheless presents the plot element in a surprisingly fresh way.

Indeed, *Hell is a City* seems to have dated very little in its key aspects. Armed thugs committing crimes and armed police tackling them are nothing new, but so heated is the current debate about giving guns to officers that you'd have thought today's generation had invented it. However, it must be said that Martineau's willingness to use the first weapon that comes to hand would nowadays lead to a howl of protest from civil rights campaigners and an investigation by the Police Complaints Commission. There is also an

interesting dramatic insight into a policeman's sympathy for a villain facing the death penalty, which does nothing to strengthen the case of those arguing to bring back hanging.

Technically, Guest was ably assisted by director of photography Arthur Grant and editor James Needs. The camera seems to be hand-held at times, giving a greater fluidity of shot, while in the robbery and the scenes on the moor, the editing creates such tension that you would think you were watching a film shot in Hollywood, not Huddersfield.

In 1960 Hammer were perhaps at the height of their powers, releasing one of their very finest films in the shape of *The Brides of Dracula*, and one of their most genuinely controversial in *Never Take Sweets From a Stranger*. Like those two contemporaries, *Hell is a City* has an edge that hasn't been dulled by time. It stands as a lasting testament to an inventive studio, some talented players and a director determined to put nothing stale on the screen.

Hell is a City has just been released at £10.99, but we have five videos to give away absolutely free courtesy of Warner Brothers Home Video.

To be in with a chance of winning a copy of *Hell is a City*, with a sleeve specially autographed by director Val Guest, simply tell us the answer to the following question:

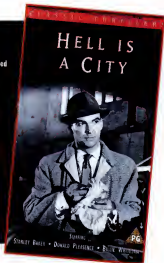
How many feature films did Val Guest direct for Hammer?

Send your entry on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope to:

Hell is a City Competition,
Hammer Horror,
Marvel Comics Ltd.,
Arundel House,
13/15 Arundel Street,
London,
WC2R 3DX

Competition rules:

1. No multiple entries will be accepted.
2. No employees of Marvel Comics Ltd., their families, or employees of the competition's sponsoring company may enter.
3. The editor's decision is final. No correspondence shall be entered into.
4. Competition entries must arrive by second post on 20th July 1995.



Every Young Girl's Dream . . .

Susan Denberg has long been considered one of the most mysterious, and tragic, of all the Hammer starlets. **Alan Barnes** ends years of speculation over her fate.



"Austrian-born Susan, 22, came to London as an au pair girl, joined the famous Bluebell Girls, and was spotted by a film man from Las Vegas . . ." ran *The Daily Mirror* on Monday 22nd August 1966, as a part of a fashion spread ("Susan finds filming can make quite a change") on the model/actress, shining star of *Frühlingsten* Crested Women.

In fact, Oetilde Deenan Zechner was actually born in war-torn Poland, at midday precisely, on 2nd August 1944. Come peacetime, her family moved to Klagenfurt, Austria, a winter sports resort with a population of around 70,000. Her father owned a string of electrical shops there. The young Oetilde would skip to school during the cold Austrian winter. An early theatrical experience saw her play an angel in a school play. She grew rebellious; a later report card claimed her to be "Restless and a bad influence on the others, but good at athletics and all forms of sport." By the time she was eighteen, she had had enough. "I'd had it with the provincial ways of Klagenfurt," she said in 1966, "so I kissed Momma, Poppa, and my two kid brothers - Ulrich and Reinhard - goodbye and headed west like your Horace Greeley advised all young people to do. My first stop was England . . ."

She started work in London as an au pair girl, but soon tired of playing nursemaid to somebody else's children. After a liaison with an airline steward, she found herself "a rich sugar daddy" to keep her in a

After a liaison with an airline steward, she found herself "a rich sugar daddy" to keep her in a Chelsea flat.

Chelsea flat. Her life began to change in the summer of 1963. Lazing away one afternoon in Hyde Park, she met a tall redhead, Helen Kosta. They struck up a friendship, and, entranced by Kosta's life as a Bluebell Girl, Oetilde inveigled her way into a meeting with Peter Baker, the Bluebells' London manager. Impressed, he sent her to Paris for an audition with the Bluebells' autocratic, semi-legendary founder, Margaret Kelly. She was duly hired and found herself earning a princely £80 per week on the London chorus line. She would later claim that "my childhood ballet lessons and the fact that I was blonde" won her the job. The work was hard, but she stuck at it and was eventually asked to tour with the troupe to the Stardust Hotel, Las Vegas. There, she made the Bluebells' acquaintance, having "decided to stay on in the States and have a go at every young girl's dream - a movie career."

Her decision was not entirely unprompted. She'd been sharing an apartment in Nevada with a young gay couple, Ruben and Nicholas. A disagreement over sleeping arrangements (to put it tactfully) led to her packing her bags and moving in with a Texan gambler, Bud. That didn't last; at a party, she met and fell in love with a handsome Latino named Tony Scotti, a singer at the Desert Inn who was being groomed for stardom by 20th Century Fox. By this time she was tiring of the Bluebell routine, and feuding regularly with one of the other girls. Bright lights beckoned; she and Tony were invited to a party thrown by Elvis Presley. She married Tony Scotti secretly at midnight on 15th October 1965, quit the Bluebells and headed for Hollywood.

Her film debut was a well-received cameo as Rita, a randy German chambermaid in the hysterically-paced film of Norman Mailer's *An American Dream*, known as *See You in Hell*, Oaring in the UK. She said of her character, "Like me, Rita is a Teutonic import with a weakness for strong-willed men. Of course the last that I speak with a German accent didn't hurt my chances of being cast in the part . . . I couldn't have asked for a better cast or director to work with on my first film. They were all screen veterans, but they still found the time to take me under their wings." She had, by now, adopted her stage name - but that didn't prevent Warner Brothers' publicity agents from dressing up a promotional scam to rename their budding starlet, offering a \$500 prize for the best suggestion. Over 5,000 responses were received (including, amusingly, Norma Mailor), but to no avail: she was to stay a 'Susan'.

Her marriage failed, and she and Tony divorced after only six months. She claimed to have had a brief affair with Stuart Whitman, the male lead of *An American Dream*. "What was important to me," she said, "was that I was being noticed by people that mattered. My philosophy was: Be nice to the stars, let your name be linked with theirs, and sooner or later you'll make it. Why not use sex to get on? Others do it and I haven't heard an actor or a producer complain." The saddest of these fancies was undoubtedly that with a man she nicknamed 'Sted', a "rugged six-footer" she knew from his appearances in Westerns. He introduced her to marijuana, amyl nitrate, and swinging parties. One night, jealous of others' attentions, he bullwhipped her viciously across the back. Other





Susan celebrated her 22nd birthday on 2nd August 1966, during production of *Frankenstein Created Woman*. She was joined in her celebration by colleagues Peter Cushing, Terence Fisher, Dorothy Walters and Anthony Nelson Keys.

alleged dates at this time included Sammy Davis Jr and Richard Pryor; she gave her number to Lee Marvin, but he never called back.

She took an apartment in Beverly Hills, and acting classes at LA's Desilu Studio Workshop. They soon paid off when she secured a place as Magda, one of the eponymous heroines of Desilu's early *Star Trek* episode, *Maid's Women*. Her classes continued: she was coached in voice and diction by one Madame Gertrude Fogler. "If the studio heads think I have an accent now, they should have heard me mangle the language when I first hit town." It was

Alleged dates at this time included Sammy Davis Jr and Richard Pryor; she gave her number to Lee Marvin, but he never called back.

a potential problem for the young wannabe starlet; learning lines, for example, took her twice as long as most. "I still haven't learned to think in English as much as I should. . . I always end up translating [lines] into German first." She made a few more TV appearances, and played some minor parts

in minor films; their titles are unrecalled.

Playboy magazine selected her as their Miss August 1966. She posed topless for the magazine's centrefold, and a gushing profile ("Hollywood seconds *Playboy's* premise that Miss August ought to be in pictures" appeared alongside candid shots of Denberg shopping for clothes, dropping into a patisserie for "a strudel break", and lounging languorously beside a pool. She would also appear in the issue of April 1967, but by the time the spread hit the news-stands, she'd returned to England and was playing the pivotal role of Christina in Hammer's *Frankenstein's Created Women*. "I was waiting for my chance," she later said, "and finally it came. I was tested [for the role]. . . They were looking for an unknown and outside Hollywood very few people had heard of me." Presumably, it had been the Warner Brothers connection that had brought her to the company's attention. She was contacted via agents Plunkett Greene for a staggering fee of £12,000, very generous indeed by Hammer's standards at the time.

Her last nights in Hollywood were distinguished by an outrageous incident at a party hosted by Frank Sinatra: she performed an impromptu striptease beside Sinatra's swimming pool. "Dfi came my bra, my panties, every stitch I was wearing, while an appreciative audience clustered round and roared their approval. I was the hit of the evening, even though I heard later that Frank wasn't too happy about what happened. . ."

She flew to London and rented a flat in St James's

Street, Mayfair, commencing to Bray Studios to work on the film. The language barrier caused her difficulty once again, and her voice was later dubbed (by Jane Fonda's of the *Ripper* Morrow. It has been suggested) she threw herself on the mercy of the company's publicity machine: there was a photo session on the *Frankenstein* set on her 22nd birthday, complete with Cushing, cake, and cleaver. (Her evening celebrations, incidentally, took place at Victor Lowndes's then notorious and oh-so-daring *Playboy Club* in Park Lane.) Another session with Cushing, for which Denberg donned a white bikini, appeared to depict dramatic scenes from the film, but bore absolutely no relation to the script. Perhaps her strangest publicity stunt was awarding prizes at a Soap Box Grand Prix (actually a go-kart race) held on Sunday 14th August. The event was covered by ITN, *Kine Weekly* and *The Sun*, whose feature of the next morning, "The Soap Box Starlet", depicted Denberg behind a kart with a small boy perched behind. It read:

... [It must be] a considerable time since actress Susan Denberg took a ride in one. If indeed the lady of *Da bog* had been in Austria ever occupied themselves in mid-air. Unlikely, come to think of it. If Miss Denberg looked anything like she does now. However, the actress, who has just finished

filming an epic called *Frankenstein's Created Women* [sic], took to a soap box at London's Battersea Park yesterday.

Her chauffeur [was] 13-year-old Jeffrey Forgas, of Wimbledon, who took £25 and the monster cup . . . for winning the Soap Box Grand Prix arranged to promote a film called *The Great Race*.

Though still a minority pursuit, perhaps soap box racing would catch on in a big way . . . If Miss Denberg were there to greet every winner.

Frankenstein's Created Women opened in May 1967. . . I was hailed for my looks, if not my acting", she beamed. Now resident in the UK, she took a jaunt to New York for a beano to celebrate the opening of John Huston's *The Bible*. There, she and a friend, Claudine, were introduced to Anthony Quinn. They got on famously. Her alleged dates grew ever more celebrated. Charles Bronson, Tami Lopez, Hugh O'Brien, Sidney Poitier, Roman Polanski . . . All of swinging London was her eyer. She wasn't unduly concerned by



Lined up for the start of the first heat in the Great Race Soap Box Grand Prix

Crowds see Great Race Grand Prix



Susan Denberg presents eight-year-old David Block with his prize-winning chequer for second place, watched by race-winner Jeff Forgas, seen with the Grand Prix Trophy

A big crowd took advantage of the glorious weather on Sunday, August 14, to watch the Great Race Soap Box Grand Prix at Battersea Park.

Organised by Associated British Cinemas publicity department, the event was inspired by the Warner Bros hit comedy "The Great Race", which is now on release in the London area.

Edwards and between cable and fourteen arrived 400 the race in a colourful procession of vehicles, the common feature being that they were all pedal-powered. Last major breakdown, and quick repairs were all part of the morning's fun and the second winner of the silver trophy was thirteen-year-old Jeffrey Forgas of Wimbledon.

Susan Denberg, actress who recently starred with Peter Cushing in "Frankenstein's Created Women", was at the line-up line in person the Great Race Trophy and cheques to the winner and runner-up.

Independent Television News covered the event, the scene ending and *Radio's* "The O'Clock Club" featured the race on Tuesday. Excellent coverage resulted, too, in the national mail last year.



head. Electrodes were placed over her body. A switch was pulled, and the current ceased through her. Three times she underwent this 'therapy' before she absconded. She was brashly discharged, before being sent to a mental asylum. 'There were no chains. We could sit on the floor or walk or just stand there.' At night, she was locked alone in a cell.

She lived to tell the tale. 'The Girl Who Went to Hell and Back' roared a headline in Britain's *News of the World* on Sunday 23rd November 1969.

'Actress Susan Denberg writes the astonishing story of what she had to do to be a star.'

Over three editions, she hardly told the story of 'a Hollywood dream that became a nightmare'. 'A Spinning Top Game - and suddenly I'm on the slippery slope' - 'The terror treatment': of the drugs, the sex, the disillusionment, the horror. 'If this story warns other young girls who are offered a bite at the red apple of stardom, only to find a Garden of Eden swarming with vipers,' she wrote, 'I shall have achieved something.'

'I'm cured now, and determined not to make the same mistakes. I feel everything's in front of me again. Despite all that's happened, it's a good feeling. I've learned the hard way that the wild life does not pay. . . I'm still only 25, Hollywood is beckoning once more - and this time I'll go there with my eyes open.'

The call never came. Her comeback was not to be.

The story's end remains the subject of some debate, although the overwhelming weight of opinion has it that the unfortunate girl's death soon followed. Perhaps we know too much already, and it's best to content ourselves with what we've got, a good film containing a wonderful performance by a little girl from a little town in Austria. . . .



her lack of work. 'I held out for the top scripts, and turned down more than a dozen that didn't come up to the mark,' she claimed. She is thought to have been the original choice for the part of Rebecca, the title role of the 1967 Anglo-French co-production, *Girl on a Motorcycle*. Reportedly, star Alain Delon refused the part initially because he did not approve of those originally intended as his director and co-star: on 5th August 1967, Marianne Faithfull won the rôle.) And so Denberg carried on, her nights spent living the high-life in restaurants and nightclubs: *The Mirebelle*, *The Cypriot*, *The White Elephant* in Curzon Street, Dolly's Discotheque. She'd also been re-introduced to the dubious pleasures of depe, which made her feel 'very sexy and wild. And there was never a hangover.' Getting over an affair with Jim Brown, whom she met while he was shooting *The Dirty Dozen* at Elstree, she booked a flight and somehow ended up in Sardinia. There, in the company of a Swedish man, Lars, and his chum Glenda, she discovered LSD.

It turned out to be the biggest mistake she'd ever made.

'I took a little white tablet . . . and learned for the first time that hell could exist,' she testified. 'People called it a 'bad trip'. For me, it was a lightning-mind-crushing journey.' But acid, together with the depe, would become a habit, and appear to precipitate a breakdown. Back in London, she found herself - unsurprisingly - fast-running out of money. She found it impossible to maintain the rent on her Mayfair flat, and moved to a shabby bedsit at Earl's Court, where 'I sat alone among my piled-up baggage containing my beautiful clothes, and cried day after day . . . Under the influence of 'grass' and LSD, which I was now taking every day, I did things I'd normally have never dreamed of. I slept badly. I had bad dreams all the time, and often they overlapped into the day so that in the end I could hardly tell the dreams from the reality . . . I'd wake up screaming.'

Word got around of her crack-up and her father flew over from Austria. Reluctantly, she agreed to return with him to Klagenfurt, where she was made an appointment with a neurologist. The story twists (further here): evidence of a childhood abuse incident involving 'a cousin' appears to have been uncovered. She was sent to a hospital in Vienna, where she endured electric shock therapy. 'The treatment' as she called it, involved her being strapped into a chair with a metal skullcap on her



The Brides of Frankenstein

Although Frankenstein Created Woman for Hammer in 1967, he pulled off the same trick on numerous other occasions. MJ Simpson looks at some of the Baron's more adventurous experiments...

Although most people think of Frankenstein's creation as male, the idea of a female monster is in fact as old as the story itself. In Mary Shelley's original novel, the miserable Creature promises to leave Frankenstein and the rest of humanity alone if the scientist will build him a female as a mate. Frankenstein travels to a remote Isle in the Drineys and embarks upon the creation of this monstrous bride, before having second thoughts and destroying the half-completed body, thus bringing down on himself and his own bride the full wrath of the original monster.

The screen's first female monster was Elsa Lanchester, who starred in 1935's *The Bride of Frankenstein*. In this direct sequel to the 1931 classic, Colin Clive's Frankenstein is persuaded to create a mate for Karloff's Creature, but when given life she rejects the original monster, who destroys them both with a laboratory fire and the pitiful line "We belong dead!" Lanchester's appearance in the rôle became almost as famous as Karloff's; her long red hair was swept up around a wire cage, with white 'lightning streaks' added. The design was loosely borrowed from the Egyptian Queen Nefertiti.

Despite all the retellings, sequels and parodies which followed, it was not until 1958 that another 'monsteress' was created. In the B-movie *Frankenstein's Daughter*, a descendant of the original Dr Frankenstein (Donald Murphy as 'Oliver Frank') transforms teenager Sandra Knight into a bushy-browed, belated creature. He went on to fashion a second creature (played by Harry Wilson) whose strange appearance was apparently due to the fact that the make-up designer failed to realise it was supposed to be female. In an attempt to make the monster's scarred face more feminine, director Richard Cushing gave it some heavy lipstick!

Maverick Spanish film-maker Jess Franco made two bizarre Frankenstein films in 1972, the second of which featured both male and female creatures. Released in America as *The Erotic Rites of Frankenstein*, the original Spanish title was *La Moledora de Frankenstein* (which translates as *The Curse of Frankenstein*, a title which had already been used for the Spanish release of Hammer's 1957 film). Fernando Bilbao played the Karloff rôle, although the female monster was uncredited. Franco's Frankenstein was British actor Dennis Price (also in Hammer's *The Horror of Frankenstein* and *Twins of Evil*). Like most of Franco's incoherent body of work, *Erotic Rites* makes no sense whatsoever.

Only marginally easier to follow, and using the same idea of an attempt to spawn a whole new race from a breeding pair of monsters, was Andy Warhol's *Frankenstein*, also known as *Flesh for Frankenstein*. Released in 1973, this extremely gory European co-production – effectively filmed in 3-D –

was on the infamous list of 'video nasties' down up in the early 1980s. Udo Kier played Frankenstein, with Srdjan Zelenovic and Dalila Di Lazzaro as the perfect couple he creates.

Jane Seymour played Prima, the beautiful creation of Learned Whitting's Victor in the 1973 American TV movie *Frankenstein The True Story*. As with Susan Denberg's Christine in *Frankenstein Created Woman* (and, indeed, most female monsters) Prima proved a more successful experiment than the earlier male creation. In this case,



the latter was Michael Sarrazin, who showed his displeasure by tearing her head off at a society function!

There were actually two versions of the story on American television that year, the other simply called *Frankenstein*. Produced by the team behind vampire soap *Dark Shadows*, this was closer to the Shelley novel than *The True Story*, but suffered from lower production values. Robert Forwards was Frankenstein, creating first Bo Svensen and then Rosella Hune as his bride.

The 1975 Swedish/English co-production *Victor Frankenstein* was – and remains – the most faithful adaptation of the Shelley novel. Calvin Floyd directed Leon Vitali and Per Oscarsson as creator and creation, and in keeping with the book the female monster was only partially completed.

The Bride was a 1985 sequel to *The Bride of Frankenstein*, exploring what might have happened if the two monsters had lived. The ideas in the film were intriguing, but the direction and performances – Jennifer Heals and Clancy Brown as the monsters. Sung as Frankenstein – left something to be desired. Once again, a beautiful female creation followed an ugly male one. The same year saw two American needs inspired by the 1931 *Frankenstein* to create a perfect woman – Kelly Le Brock – in John Hughes's *Weird Science*.

Dr Hackett was an awful 1988 comedy about a mad scientist killing young girls in order to piece together for his dead wife, whose head he had kept alive. A similar plot, updated, featured in Frank Henenlotter's 1990 *Frankenhooker*. Although the resulting patchwork creation looked quite effective, the film was almost as bad as Dr Hackett's.

Roger Corman's *Frankenstein Unbound*, based on a Brian Aldiss novel, saw Raul Julia's Frankenstein forced by his monster (Nick Brimble) to create a bride from the body of his fiancée Elizabeth (Catherine Rabett). This harkened back 55 years to *The Bride of Frankenstein*, the original storyline of which had Elizabeth's (Valerie Hobson) brain put into Elsa Lanchester's body.

The idea of the bride of Frankenstein being created from Frankenstein's actual bride was finally utilised in the 1994 blockbuster *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. Whatever one may think of the film, the final scenes with Elizabeth's (Helen Bonham-Carter) fire-scarred head on the body of Justine (Trevyn McDowell) are undeniably powerful. In an age when most horror films rely on quick shocks or gross effects, the sight of Kenneth Branagh dancing with his hideous bride – an image bordering on acrophilia – is disturbing and genuinely horrific. Frank Dacomb's script called it "the most sweepingly romantic and hair-raisingly demented image of the film".

It seems Frankenstein's female creations are not only generally better constructed than their male counterparts, but also generally more frightening. -J-



"Within her,
a dead man's
revengeful urge
to kill!"

American trailer

NOW HAMMER HAVE CREATED THE ULTIMATE IN EVIL!

PETER CUSHING · SUSAN DENBERG · THORLEY WALTERS.





FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN

Cast and credits

Baron Frankenstein

Christina
Doctor Hertz
Hans
The Prisoner
Anton
Karl
Johann
Kleve
Chief of Police
Mayor
Landlord
Priest
Bystander
Spokesman
First Guard
Young Hans
Sergeant
Travelling Lady
Chief Gaoier
Spokesman No. 2
Dignitary
Another Dignitary

Peter Cushing

Susan Denberg
Thorley Walters
Robert Morris
Duncan Lament
Peter Blythe
Berry Warren
Derek Fowlds
Alan MacNaughtan
Peter Madden
Philip Ray
Ivan Beavis
Colin Jeavons
Bartlett Mullins
Alec Mango
Unknown *
Stuart Middleton *
John Maxim *
Unknown *
Kevin Flood *
Unknown *
Unknown *

Music Composed By

Music Supervisor
Director of Photography
Production Designer
Supervising Editor
Production Manager
Editor
Assistant Director
Camera Operator
Art Director
Sound Recordist
Sound Editor
Continuity
Make-up
Hair Stylist
Wardrobe Mistress
Wardrobe Master
Costing
Special Effects
1st Camera Assistant (Focus)
Other Camera Assistant
Sound Camera Operators
Boom Operator
Sound Maintenance
Dubbing Crew
Draughtsmen
Scenic Artist
1st Assistant Editor
Other Assistant Editor
2nd Assistant Director
3rd Assistant Director
Production Secretary
Publicity Directors
Stills Cameraman
Original Screenplay By
Executive Producer
Produced By
Directed By

James Bernard

Philip Martell
Arthur Grant BSC
Bernard Robinson
James Needs
Ian Lewis
Spencer Reeve
Douglas Hercules
Meray Grant
Don Mingaye
Ken Rankins
Ray Hyde
Eileen Head
George Partleton
Freida Stelger
Rosemary Barrows
Larry Stewart
Irene Lamb
Ian Eadie
Bob Jordan *
Eddy Collins *
Al Thorne and Jake Soutar *
Charles Wheeler *
Cyril Hunt *
Ansell *
Tom Gosnell *
Zellie Sergejch *
Elizabeth Redstone *
Chris Brennan *
Joe Marks *
Christopher Nisame *
Pat Sims *
Alan Thompson, Bob Webb *
Tom Edwards *
John Elder *
Anthony Hinds *
Anthony Nelson Keys
Terence Fisher

* Uncredited in finished print

♦ Pseudonym for Anthony Hinds

Uncredited character names from shooting script. Credit order from film print, then additional credits in order of appearance.

Associated British Pathé Limited presents

A Severn Arts-Hammer Film Production

Certificate 'X'

Produced at Bray Studios, England

Distributed by Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation

Duration 86 minutes, length 7.754 feet

Technicolor

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The Characters



BARON FRANKENSTEIN

"To the best of my knowledge doctorates are not awarded for witchcraft, but if ever they are, no doubt I shall qualify for one."

Frankenstein is here at his most philanthropic, not only bringing Christina back to life but also curing her limp and alleviating her dermatological problems in the process. Characteristically, though, he completely fails to reckon with the human cost of his explorations. He sears Hertz's proposal that they ask Hans's permission before attempting the soul transference, and later, faced with a man trapped inside a woman's body, he has the impudence to ask 'it' to make him his breakfast.

CHRISTINA

"Please . . . Who am I?"

She may well ask. After a miserable existence as the neighbourhood freak – an embarrassment to her father and the butt of young men's brutal jokes – she is reincarnated as a ravishing beauty with the cruelest kind of identity crisis imaginable. Her new father is even less understanding than the old one, and despite the crumbs of comfort provided by surrogate father Hertz, a second stab at suicide seems the only logical answer to her overwhelming confusions.



DR HERTZ

"I am a muddlehead . . . I'm a broken-down, drunken old muddlehead."

The neighbourhood GP, Hertz is absent-minded, soft-hearted and mystified from start to finish by the experiments in which he so enthusiastically collaborates. He can be quite sharp when he needs to be, though – he blackmails the local gaoler with consummate ease. Robbed of a surrogate son when Hans is executed, he quickly 'adopts' the rejuvenated Christina instead, and, despite everything, never swerves from his belief that Frankenstein is "a wonderful man."

HANS

"That temper of mine is always getting me into trouble . . .

It'll get me hanged one day."

Hans has to cope not only with the traumatising boyhood experience of seeing his father decapitated but also with the casual cruelties of the community in which he lives. No wonder he finds solace in the Baron's bizarre experiments and in the arms of the other local parish, Christina Kieve. Though unjustly condemned to the guillotine, he finds time to feed the rats that share his cell.

Sympathy for the underdog is only to be expected from a young man as unlucky as Hans.



JOHANN, KARL & ANTON

"I'll report you! I'll tell my father!"

Anton's childish threat to the new innkeeper could just as easily have come from the lips of his feckless friends, Karl and Johann. Members of some malevolent, mid-European forerunner of Bertie Wooster's Drones Club, the trio are typical of insufferable little rich boys everywhere, omitting to pay their bills, quick to abuse anyone socially 'inferior' and easily provoked into hysterical violence. As the ringleader, Anton is perhaps a shade nastier than the others, but, when they get their just deserts courtesy of the new-look Christina, it's impossible to shed tears for any of them.



The Story

A drunken prisoner, condemned to death for murder, is taken to a guillotine standing stark and alone amid a bleak landscape. A young, ineffectual priest arrives on a donkey, and begins to mumble in Latin. As two guards ready the prisoner for execution, he observes a small figure watching from the bushes beyond: his son, Hans. The priest chases the boy away, and the prisoner, agitated, begs his escort to have his head cut right away. But as the blade comes crashing down, the boy reappears, and witnesses his father's last, terrible moment. Some twelve years pass. Hans, now fully grown, passes the rusted guillotine on his way to the house of Doctor Hertz, the desolate and self-confessed "muddlehead" who practises in the adjacent town. Hans - Hertz's simple dogbody, fetcher and carrier - rushes upstairs to Hertz's recently-converted attic-laboratory, where they pull a frozen sarcophagus from a specially adapted chamber, and revive its occupant - Baron



Victor Frankenstein. Frankenstein, a new arrival in town, has badly burned hands as a result of a previous accident, and is exploiting Hertz's nature to assist him in the researches which have led to this latest experiment. The Baron has allowed himself to die for precisely one hour, during which time his soul has not left his body. As he specialises as to the reason why, Hertz instructs Hans to go into the town and fetch a bottle of champagne to celebrate their success. They have no money, but Frankenstein tells Hans that he will settle with the landlord later.

With Hertz's coat on his back, Hans rushes to a café-bar run by Klee and his disgraced daughter Christina, for whom Hans carries a torch. Klee forces Hans to pay for the champagne with Hertz's coat, but their terse dialogue is interrupted by the arrival of Anton, Karl and Johann, three disaffected and arrogant young bucks whose families head the town. They demand that the club-fetted Christina wait upon them, and proceed to taunt her cruelly as she passes from table to table. Hans, seething, looks on. Christina accidentally spills red wine over Anton's lopsided garb; Anton pushes her to the floor in retaliation. Hans challenges him, and a three-up-one scuffle ensues, in which Anton is badly cut by Hans. The police arrive to find a knife-wielding Hans threatening to kill the 'bloody'. Hans is summarily ejected; Klee, however, will not press charges, and sends his daughter back home forthwith. Frankenstein and Hertz encroach upon the scene; Hertz patches Anton up for a fee.

Hans shuffles up to Christina's bedroom: they make love. Ejected from the café, Anton, Karl and Johann sing a vicious serenade to "the ugliest angel of them all" in the street below. Tiring of their sport, they stagger back to the café and watch Klee depart; as the landlord heads homeward, they re-enter the café, intending to drink the house dry. But Klee has left his keys behind, and returns unexpectedly. Discovered, the 'bloody' set upon him with their canes, and club him to death. They flee.

Back in the laboratory, Frankenstein has created an artificial 'force-shield' from which nothing can escape, and announces mysteriously that he has "conquered death": that by trapping a soul inside this shield, he can restore a dead body to life and then return the essence of that person to their body. Later, Klee's body is discovered. Beside it, Hertz's coat, last seen on Hans...

The morning, Hans sees Christina onto the innbed coach, where she has

an appointment with a doctor who claims to be able to treat her affliction. Venturing back into town, he passes Klee's café, and is promptly arrested by the police and charged with the murder. Without an alibi, the kangaroo court assembled shortly after convicts him easily. He is to be guillotined at dawn. Upon Frankenstein's command, a reluctant Hertz, threatening blackmail, forces the town's Chief Gaolet to let him have Hans's body after the execution. Hans's appointment with death arrives, and Christina's coach trundles past the guillotine just in time to witness his execution. Stricken with grief, she hurls herself from her bedage, drowning in the torrent below. The bodies of both Hans and Christina end up in Frankenstein's possession. Frankenstein extracts and captures Hans's soul...

Six months pass, and Frankenstein and Hertz have repaired and revived Christina's body, making her beautiful and graceful. An amnesiac, she is unaware that Hans's soul shares her flame, a fact proven by Frankenstein when he takes her to the guillotine, reawakening Hans's memories of his father. Later that night, Christina awakes, strangely enamored, and dresses herself...

Anton, out strolling, thinks he hears Hans's voice in the shadows. Terrified, he joins Karl and Johann in the café. They soon tire of his company, and leave.

A jittery Anton encounters the unrecognisable Christina in the street, who exhorts him with seductive promises to follow her to the deserted Klee house. In the house, she disappears into an adjoining room, from whence Hans's voice calls out to the terrified Anton. Come the morning, the town's guillotine is once more wet with blood. The two remaining lops compe in the café the following night. Agitated and remorseful, Johann deserts Karl, leaving him alone in the café. But not for long. Christina enters, and tries out the same routine upon Karl that she'd used upon Anton. Excusing herself to the kitchen, she reappears and sets upon him with a meat cleaver. His body is later found, written in blood beside is a single word - "HANS".

A delegation of superstitious dignitaries visits the Baron, threatening to try him for witchcraft. Frankenstein persuades them to exhumate Hans's body to prove his own innocence. Upon doing so, however, the coffin is found to have been tampered with - and the head is now missing. Christina has it impaled upon her bedpost. Hans's parapsychical instructions echo in her head: "Kill Johann". Meanwhile Johann, scared witless, is packing his things. Returning to the house, Hertz and Frankenstein find Christina



missing, Johann boards the innbed coach. His sole travelling companion is none other than Christina. Confronted, Frankenstein confesses all to the Chief of Police, but makes a break for it and hurries after the innbed coach in a horse and trap. One of the coach horses, however, has thrown a shoe on route and Christina has persuaded Johann to walk the rest of the way through the woods, picnicking on the way. By the time Frankenstein finds them, Johann lies bloody, stabbed to death, and Christina has taken Hans's amputated head from her hat-box. The head tells her she can now rest; she runs away. Frankenstein gives chase but Christina races to a nearby gorge and throws herself - once more - into the swirling rapids far below. Sadly, Frankenstein turns on his heel and walks away.



In Production

(Indicated by snow falling post Herzt's attic window) there is a brief scene in which Frankenstein checks on Christina's shrouded, but "alive and breathing" form. Following Christina's rebirth, and Herzt giving her a mirror, two short character

And God Created Women, French writer-director Roger Vadim's notorious Brigitte Bardot vehicle of 1957, inspired Anthony Hinds to suggest spoofing the title in 1958 as a possible follow-up to *The Revenge of Frankenstein*. And then *Frankenstein Created Woman*. "We pitched the title, yes," he confirmed many years later. "That was my idea." The notion got as far as being announced as forthcoming in a late 1958 edition of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*; however, the project appears to have become sidelined shortly after, and *The Evil of Frankenstein* began development in mid-1962. Evil performed well in the US (if slightly disappointingly close to home), and *Fear of Frankenstein* was duly announced as part of the huge 11-picture production deal struck in July 1965 between Hammer, Seven Arts, Twentieth Century-Fox, and Associated British. Fear was abandoned and Hinds's former title revived, albeit shortened to the punchier *Frankenstein Created Woman*. After a meeting at Fox headquarters, Colonel James Connors reported to his colleagues that Fox magnate Darryl Zanuck had "enthusiastically endorsed the choice of title for the film."

The Script

On June 1966, the shooting script was revised on 24th June, 27th June, 30th June, 12th July, and further minor amendments made in an internal memo sent out a week later by producer Anthony Nelson Keys. In addition to various small prunings of dialogue and so on, several whole scenes were lost entirely in the process; amongst them the first test administered by Frankenstein upon the indestructible wine glass, wherein the Baron "picks up a heavy stick... and, raising it slowly, brings it down onto the glass. Just before impact, the rod shatters, leaving the glass untouched. Frankenstein looks round, triumphant."

Johann's testimony would have followed Frankenstein's at the kangaroo court ascribed to try Hans: "He shouted, 'They're going to get what they deserve,' and he had this knife in his hand." "And then?" "He attacked!" Cut, too, was a rather tasteless speech given by the Chief Gailer to Hans, in the latter's condemned cell: "Having a good meal, eh? Best way - better on a full stomach. Won't be long now - soon be over. Sooner the better for you, eh? No point in dragging these things on. What has to be done, has to be done... The gallotine - nothing to worry about, you know. You should know, it's in your family, as a manner of speaking... I'll leave you in peace, then. You'll have plenty to be thinking about. All the things you done and wish you hadn't, eh? The Priest'll be here in a moment - you can tell him all about them. That's if he doesn't forget. You know, when they topped your old man, he nearly missed [the execution]..."

A very long sequence, detailing the events of the six months between Christina's death and awakening, was cut altogether. The first scene takes place in a graveyard:

The Priest reads the burial service as the coffin of Christina is lowered into the grave next to that of her father. There is a handful of mourners... [including] surprisingly, Frankenstein and Herzt. They move away with suitably solemn expressions, passing a simple grave apart from the others. The simple headboard reads:

HANS BERNER

Born 1876

Executed 1895

May God have mercy on his soul

They hesitate, glance down at it, and smile...

The Gravediggers start to fill in the girl's grave. Her headstone reads:

CHRISTINA KLEEVE

Beloved daughter of Anton and Gerda Kleeve

Born 1876

Died 1895

May She Rest in Peace

The gravediggers even get a curt dialogue: "The coffin seemed light to me." "She was only a slip of a girl..." During the following winter

scenes were snipped: Christina waking up after a nightmare, and being comforted by the good Doctor; and a scene the next morning, where she is seen pondering over the initials "CK" marked on her trunk ("Christina... what? Kreeve? Kraus? Koenig?") only to be interrupted by Herzt, bringing her a hat-box with a new hat inside, "to celebrate... Come, the sun is shining - the birds are singing. A perfect day for your first outing." Christina's face clouds, "I'm frightened..."

Anton's death is more clearly elaborated by a shot following that of the bloodied gallotine blades: "... In the basket is the head of Anton. A small group stands around. It is the Police Sergeant who picks up the head and stuffs it in a sack." That night, a group of villagers - plus Karl and Johann - are seen crouching in the café. The new landlady recalls Anton's last appearance, while the spokesman and a bystander speculate over the identity of the probable culprit: "If there's anything - unnatural going on, we know who'll be at the bottom of it, don't we?" "Black-hands." "Baron Frankenstein," nods the spokesman. Immediately after, there is a dialogue between

Christina and the Baron. Late at night, she takes him a hot drink, unprompted. "Are you happy here?" he asks. "Yes, of course," she replies. "At least, I'd be happier if I knew who I am... [I know] only what the Doctor has told me... that I must have lost my memory - you found me wandering about the mountain outside. And that I was... a cripple." She thanks him for his "kindness," which prompts him to state simply, "Kindness doesn't enter into it. I am a scientist - you are the subject of my research." And later still, we cut to a shot of the villagers leaving the café: "... the CAMERA MOVES TO REVEAL the figure of Christina, 'stunned up' once more, standing in the shadows - waiting."

An earlier draft of the script saw the method of Christina's ultimate suicide differ from that depicted. It was through stabbing herself, and not drowning, that the hapless girl originally met her end.



FRANKENSTEIN
CREATED WOMAN
COSTA LA FEMME
1957

Casting

Hammer's new star discovery was Polish Dietlinde Zechner, better known at the time as Susan Denberg - *Playboy's* Miss August 1966. The former au pair girl had already been seen in the *Star Trek* episode *Mudd's Women* and Norman Mailer's *An American Dream*. Sadly, Denberg was plagued by mental health problems elicited by drug abuse, and *Frankenstein Created Woman* marked the effective end of her brief career.

In the third lead was Hammer stalwart Thorley Walters, happy to be working once again alongside Peter Cushing. Several critics would later point out the Holmes/Watson subplot to the *Frankenstein*/Fitzke relationship: "I think it just developed as we went," he recalled in a 1988 interview with *US* fanzine *Little Shoppe of Horrors*. "Peter Cushing is an extremely nice man, very generous, very professional... I just enjoyed doing the job. I remember lots of work in the laboratory with lots of pipes and things about. Cutting people's heads off and so on! I'd got good people to work with."

Peter Elythe would later be Roger de Courtenay in Hammer's *A Challenge For Robin Hood*; most recently, he appeared as nefarious boson Vincent Stant in Scots sitcom *The High Life*. Barry Warren, too, was no Hammer agent, with *Kiss of the Vampire* and *The Devil-Ship Pirates* to his credit. Latterly, he could be seen in a 1991 *Lovelyjoke* episode, *Just Desserts*. Derek Fowlds is now one of the best-known character actors on British television. After playing second fiddle to a stylized fox as one of Basil Brush's put-upon presenters (and a small part in Jim O'Connell's 1972 exploitation flick, *Tower of Evil*), he took the part of Parliamentary Private Secretary Bernard Woolley in the long-running *Yes, Minister* and its follow-up, *Yes, Prime Minister*. A similar role later beckoned while *Prime Minister's Questions* - only Chief Whip Tim Sanger in the acclaimed political drama *House of Cards* and *To Play the King*. The other genre skeleton in his closet is playing the Commissioner in Pete Walker's splatterer *Slasher* of 1977, *Schizo*.

Chief of Police Peter Madden's exhaustive list of horror/Hammer credits includes Dr Bradley in 1957's *Fiend Without a Face*; Bert Darwin in *Hell is a City*; Bruno in *Kiss of the Vampire*; Catib in *Dr Terror's House of Horrors*; a caddy in *Frankenstein* and the *Monster From Hell*; and a supporting role in Hammer comedy *Monsters and Menstrues*. He once said, "I'm generally cast as a baddy because I've got such a miserable Moody face. Thank God I never



wanted to be a star." His last film role was as the 'Toothless Man' in 1976's Lebanese production, *Al-Risalah* (*The Message*, aka *Mohammed, Messenger of God*) alongside André Morell; he died that same year. Alex Mango flirted once more with the *Frankenstein* mythos as Murray in Ken Russell's Gothic. Scots actor Alan MacNaughtan's most recent work to date is Arthur Miller's *A View From the Bridge* at the Strand Theatre, London. Scouser Ivor Davis was best known as widower Harry Hewitt in the early days of Granada's *Coronation Street*. And pity poor Barden Mullins. He'd been scheduled to appear as a tramp in the earlier *The Curse of Frankenstein*; his scenes were absent from the finished film, and thus he didn't get to appear alongside the Baron for 11 years. He can also be seen in *Peeping Tom*, and as the blind man in 1972's anthology *Tales From the Crypt*.

Shooting

Producer Anthony Nelson Keys put the plot of this latest Hammer effort succinctly: "This time Frankenstein creates a beautiful girl from one who has been ugly. Only something goes wrong. She goes around chopping people's heads off with an axe." He continued by outlining three basic horror

precepts. "To begin with, you need some basis of legend or backing of some well-tried classic of literature. Secondly, we have to be utterly serious when we are making the films. Serious and dedicated. Then - lastly - audiences must have some degree of self-identification. They must believe it could happen to them walking home from the cinema." *Frankenstein Created Woman* was budgeted at £140,020; it came in, however, at £138,595.

Hammer had originally intended that the film would be mounted at the ABC Elstree studio facility, finding Elstree booked, Bernard Robinson's sets were accordingly built on the Bray sound stages between 20th June and 2nd July 1966. Principal photography commenced two days thereafter, on Monday 4th July. Last-minute problems were experienced in the costume department; minutes of July 1966 record that "certain difficulties... had arisen in connection with *Frankenstein Created Woman*... these were of a temporary nature and caused... particularly by the requirements of Doctor Dolittle. The troubled shooting of the latter had commenced at Pinewood; after shifting to location in Wiltshire, the American producers had grown frustrated by their inability to film due to the awful English weather, and had decamped the entire production to Hollywood. London costume agency Bermans was therefore, presumably, unable to deliver pre-booked costumes to the *Frankenstein* set;



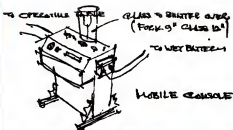
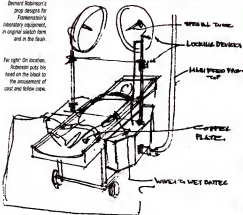
Susan Denberg and Anthony Nelson Keys enjoy an intermission in location shooting





Bernard Robinson's prop designs for Frankenstein's laboratory equipment, in original sketch form and in the flesh.

Far right: On location, Robinson puts his head on the block to the amusement of cast and fellow crew.



they were being worn by *Dollittle* extras on the other side of the *Atlantis* Trench Magazine profiled production designer Bernard Robinson in its edition of November, 1966. Journalist Margaret Flannery interviewed Robinson on the set of *Frankenstein Created Woman*, and conveyed her impressions accordingly:

... Meanwhile, back in the studio, a glimpse of the Frankenstein style. "Fire up the steam, Charlie." Steam belches obediently from a single jet in the midst of an Emmet-like contraption, all coils and pipes, a sort of atomic distillery. Above the pipes, an overhead metal grid and the mad doctor (Peter Cushing) is daffily attaching two alligator clips to this latter-day nuclear bedwiper. Then, with diabolical cunning, he attaches two more alligator clips to another infernal machine. The juke is on and two lamps belt rays on the poor heatless victim lying full length on an outside chopping block. The holes in his grey necks are tragically off-camera. "There Frankenstein," Robinson nodded. "The bunnies are all the same - a few bits and pieces sewn together and some new spark of life ..."

Several days' location work were deemed necessary: on a hill-top, the crest of a gorge, a bridge, by a riverside, and in woodland. Extenders were also built on the main Bray lot; the café, Kew's house, and streets surrounding. A myth has grown up that all opposing street ends were sets for the *Frankenstein* and the Egyptian market-place of *The Mummy's Shroud*: they were never in use simultaneously, since *Frankenstein Created Woman's* main shooting block ended exactly on schedule, on Friday 12th August, and the *Shroud* sets didn't start to go up until over a fortnight later.

James Bernard's soundtrack was added on 14th October; sound dubs were made at the Anvil Theatre, Beaconsfield, three

days later. It appears that several minutes' worth of material was shaved from various cuts of the film: an early US press screening was reported by *Motion Picture Herald* to run to 92 minutes' duration. By the time of the UK press previews, it had been reduced to its current length of 86 minutes. Certainly, the film lost five minutes' worth of material between rough cuts viewed on 6th and 21st September respectively.



The American trailer included two brief time-drawing animations blending seamlessly into film close-ups of Frankenstein and Christine's bandaged head. Over clips ran pounding music – including snatches of the original Curse Frankenstein theme, plus the main theme from, strangely, *The Mummy's Shroud* – and a deathless narration typical of the era:

"The ultimate in evil, and desire! Frankenstein, monster and madman! A beautiful woman, with the soul of the Devil!

Peter Cushing as Baron Frankenstein, who creates swords with Satan in his fight for immortality!

Susan Odeberg as Christine, the deformed creature transformed by Frankenstein to a living beauty. Within her, a dead man's revengeful urge to kill!

Thorley Walcott, the doctor who helps Frankenstein to violate the laws of nature! The boy dies in the coil of the Frankenstein experiment. These boys are the cause of it!"

FRANKENSTEIN CREATED WOMAN FRANKENSTEIN CREATES A NEW KIND OF SHOCK

PRESSBOOK

NOW FRANKENSTEIN HAS CREATED THE ULTIMATE IN EVIL-



PETER CUSHING SUSAN ODEBERG THORLEY WALCOTT JOHN LLOYD ANDREW NELSONS FRANKENSTEIN
A SEVEN ARTISTS PRODUCTION PRESENTS A FILM BY JOHN LLOYD

© 1969 Warner Bros. Inc. All Rights Reserved. U.S. Release Date: 1969-05-15

On Release

This, Hammer's fourth excursion into the world of Shelley's wicked Baron, premiered Stateside on 15th March 1967 with *The Mummy's Shroud* as its support feature. For a long time *Created Woman* was to have been billed alongside *Prehistoric Women* (later re-edited and re-titled *Slave Girls*). Indeed, the latter was scheduled as support as late as October 1966. Concerns over the quality of the prehistoric fantasy at Hammer House may have been a contributory factor to its delay.

After a press screening on the 15th, *Frankenstein Created Woman* received its UK debut at the New Victoria Theatre, London, on Thursday 18th May 1967, and went on general release from 18th June. As per *The Mummy's Shroud*, a



private and confidential report upon the film was prepared for distributors Warner-Pathe by McCarthy of Whitfield Street, London W1:

In the field of thrillers the name of Frankenstein is more or less a password in certain situations and this new slant on his activities should satisfy the curious... The plot itself is fantastic, but not uninteresting, though the procedure does, at times, invite laughter where none is intended... Completely staged and acted. It should prove a useful title booking. For the inventive mind there are all sorts of possibilities for exploiting *Frankenstein* and this one certainly is different, even though it doesn't live up to the gruesome qualities expected...

About the *Frankenstein* press book, which included photographs of Susan Odeberg and Anthony Nelson Keys



The film was selected by acclaimed director (and Hammer enthusiast) Martin Scorsese for reviewing in a season of his favorite films at London's National Film Theatre in January 1987. "If I single this one out," he said, "it's because here they actually isolate the soul, a bright blue shining translucent ball. The applied metaphysics is close to something sublime."

Frankenstein Created Woman was first issued as a UK home video release by Castle Pictures (CAS 5138, rated '15') in March 1991, and thereafter re-released by Lumiere Video (LUM 2211) on 22nd May 1995.

"Frankenstein films were never like this before," boasted the American press book



Comment

FROM FLESH AND INNOCENCE... FRANKENSTEIN HAS CREATED THE ULTIMATE IN EVIL and DESIRE



PETER CUSHING SUSAN DENBERG
COLOR
NORLEY WALLACE JOHN LEECH ANDREW W. CONNORS TERENCE FISHER
A GEMINI FILMS PRODUCTION RELEASED BY 20th CENTURY FOX
MAY-58

"Small and carping criticisms . . ."

15th March 1967. Ever ready with a pithy comment, Variety's 'Rebe' remarked upon the title, *Frankenstein Created Woman*. "Considering the result is a beautiful blonde Susan Denberg . . . most film fans would like to see the doctor get a grant from the Ford Foundation, or even the CIA . . . Cushing could walk through the Frankenstein part blindfolded by now but still treats it as seriously as though he were playing Hamlet . . . The remainder of the cast is uniformly superior to the rôles they're playing but Miss Denberg often seems inhibited by all the clothes she's forced to wear . . ."

The British press got their turn two months later. The *Financial Times* seemed rather taken with the film, if not its partner, *The Mummy's Shroud* (" . . . tedious and embarrassing"). Quoth the FE: "*Frankenstein's Created Woman* has something about it that holds you, despite yourself . . . [it has] a certain dash and audacity . . . and the occasional striking composition in its picture which still leaves Terence Fisher without a rival in the Hammer school." Punch drew attention to Cushing and Walters's double act on 24th May: ". . . the situation is really very like that of Holmes and Watson, and is obviously used to deliberate comic effect." Richard Davis drew a similar analogy in *Films and Filming's* issue of July 1967, Walters's "Dr Watson's assistant" reminding him "intensely of Peter Cushing's Sherlock Holmes in *Hound of the Baskervilles*." Davis was, however, less amused by other aspects of this sequel:

. . . no reference is made at all to Frankenstein's previous activities in the laboratory. True he is brought back to life at the beginning of the story, rather casually, but we are never informed which of his numerous deaths was responsible for placing him in this particular risk. Perhaps these are small and carping criticisms but I maintain that by not clarifying certain points in the Frankenstein saga, which themselves away to continue indefinitely, those responsible are

only pinpointing the implied contempt they must feel for their audiences. Whatever one says for or against the Universal series of the Hollywood forties, cinemaology was always established with painstaking thoroughness. The fact that the Hammer boys seem too lazy to build these plots on secure foundations silences me from the start. . . . Terence Fisher directs with his usual expertise, but in future let's have at least a token attempt at credibility, even in horror.

The BFI's June edition of *Monthly Film Bulletin* offered similar unfavourable comparisons with the great Karloff cycle:

It is thirty-two years since the creative Baron last applied himself to the techniques of female construction, but this new enterprise is no way matches James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein*. It could reasonably be expected from the title that the piece de resistance would be the creation of the woman, but by an unusual quirk of obliquity this is the very point in the story that is casually glossed over, and the script is more concerned with the gory murder scene which follows . . . of gender Frankensteinian there is little beyond the Baron's initial resurrection. The laboratory paraphernalia is steam-puffing and picturesque . . . but the poverty of the script is little compensation for loss of the old tradition.

"It seemed like the break I had been waiting for when I got the lead rôle with Peter Cushing in *Frankenstein Created Woman* . . . during the filming I shunned the bright lights. I was determined to work my hardest to make a success of the biggest chance I'd ever had . . . I played a beautiful girl who comes back from the dead (with Frankenstein's help) to avenge herself on three youths who killed her lover. A bit of a change from the days when I played an angel in my school plays in Klagenfurt, Austria . . . The film opened, and I was hailed for my looks, not my acting. It didn't matter. Parts were flowing in, and it was just a matter of selection. Or so I thought."

Susan Denberg — from *The News of the World*, December 1969

"There's a funny story when I was out on location near the guillotine, and I arrived on the set to be told, 'We shan't be needing you till after lunch, Mr Walters. Would you like to go out on the location and sit in a comfortable chair and relax?' . . . When I got to the woods there were some property people filling a sack or dummy person — stuffing its stomach with real pigs' entrails — meant to be real viscera! I said, 'What's that?', and they said, 'Oh, it's pigs' entrails we're using.' This was followed by, 'Mr Walters, would you like me to get you some lunch?' So I add, 'Well, what have you got to eat today?' and he replied, 'Roast pork!' That's true."

Terence Walters — from *Little Shoppe of Horrors*, 1980

"Baron Frankenstein is a complete idealist. He is consecrated to one thing and one thing only, and that is to perfect the human body, the human mind. Like most consecrated people, he is single-minded and completely ruthless in what he does. But he is governed by an idealism, he is not inhuman. He is not doing it to achieve evil in any shape or form, or to achieve riches for himself. He is not out to do anything but perfect what he considers God has not done. Either this, or he has discarded any belief in God."

Terence Fisher — from *Cinefantastique*, 1975



Peter Cushing, Susan Denberg, Anthony Nelson Keys and Terence Fisher on location near Bray Studios

Critique

But, in a way, the Baron is a more peripheral figure on this occasion. We first see him cryogenically suspended as his faithful associates, Hertz and Hains, remove him from cold storage. (Just as Hammer was doing, incidentally.) With black-gloved hands covering his face, it's a quite literal forecast of the unusually 'self-effacing' role he is to play in this latest adventure, which concentrates instead on the tragedy of Christina Kieve.

As if Christina's first incarnation weren't miserable enough, her second is bedeviled by surely the most literal case of gender confusion on record. Once her white carapace of bandages, startlingly fissured against a crimson background, has cracked open like an egg, her first unfocused sight is of the expectant yet strangely sinister faces of two middle-aged men. These two have had the impudence to take a young woman and infuse into her the soul of a young man,

Christina is a young man who knows exactly the kind of crass female image he should project in order to ensnare three other young men.

yet they continue to objectify her as if she were a young woman pure and simple. Frankenstein expects her to cook for him, while Hertz adopts her as a kind of surrogate, china-doll daughter (even dressing her up in 'Swiss Miss' costume). The three effete bully boys, meanwhile, look on her as a quite different sort of object...

The scenes in which she stalks and kills these unimpressive young men are all, like the hilarious trial sequence, brilliantly paced and staged. And they provide a further nod to Fisher's *Dracula* films. Already we've had the undead Frankenstein preserved on ice; now we have

Christina coming on exactly like a female vampire. David Pyle has co-opted her in this come-hither guise to Keat's *Lamia*, but the kind of femme fatale she most closely resembles is to be found in the magazine for which Susan Denberg had recently posed. And this is perfectly logical - Christina, after all, is a young man who knows exactly the kind of crass female image he should project in order to ensnare three other young men.

Christina's appalling confusion can only end in suicide. As a result, one of Hammer's most complex scenarios concludes with perhaps the most downbeat ending in all horror films. And when Frankenstein's fumbling attempts at philanthropy end in so dismal a fashion, it seems almost understandable that he should return three years later as the venereal, sociopathic monster of *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed*.

Surely the most startling aspect of Frankenstein Created Woman is its script. Anthony Hains has stalled it so full of neovoyalist characters and wildly outrageous events - most of them bulging with mythic and symbolic overtones - that one is tempted every moment, like Peter Madden's grim-faced Chief of Police, to say: "Do you expect us to believe all this childish rubbish, sir? Do you take us for fools?" But Terence Fisher handles each new bizarre twist and turn of the plot with so sure and steady a hand that, before we know it, the naive, fairy-tale power of the film has us completely in its grasp.

What do we have here? We have a story of teenage outcasts, aristocratic bully-boys, a repressive mid-European community, without mothers but with no fewer than four father figures, one of them a master-magician raised from the dead. It's a story so rigorously circumscribed in structure - its first phase framed by two deceptions, the second by two drownings - that the miserable events it records take on a gravenly tragic inevitability. It's a heady brew, rather as if it were written by the Brothers Grimm with 'additional dialogue' by Sigmund Freud.

What we also have, of course, is Hammer's Frankenstein saga restored to its rightful owner, Terence Fisher, after the out-of-sequence aberration of Freddie Francis's *The Evil of Frankenstein*. The Baron of Frankenstein Created Woman is older and mellower than the ruthless dandy of Fisher's first two films, but, for all the altruistic appearance of his experiments this time round, they still have a disastrous effect on the mere mortals around him. What's worse, he seems, God-like, to be either ignorant or careless of the fact. Not that he's entirely free of human frailties himself; he's visibly discomposed after examining the rejuvenated Christina's shapely limbs, a wonderfully subtle detail in Peter Cushing's characteristically dazzling performance.



Classic Scene



"The Ugliest Angel of Them All . . ."

Frankenstein Created Woman (1967)

Screenplay by John Elder

The 'bloods' - Anton (Peter Blythe), Karl (Barry Warren), and Johann (Derek Fowlds) congregate in a drunken gaggle outside Kleve's house. Inside, Kleve's disfigured daughter Christina (Susan Denberg) and her simple paramour Hans (Robert Morris) find their lovemaking disturbed by Anton's cruel serenade:

Sweet Christina, fair of face
Blessed with beauty, filled with grace
Lonely on your virgin bed
You'll stay a virgin til you're dead!

In your dreams, a handsome lad
Comes creeping to your virgin bed
Hide your face, don't let him see
One look at it, and he will flee!

Sweet Christina, don't you cry
It won't be long before you die
Then in the heavens, a star will fall
For the ugliest angel of them all!

Karl and Johann join him in chorus.

For the ugliest angel of them all! ✚



Frankenstein Created Woman

compiled by

Alan Barnes - The Story, Its Production,
The Script, Casting, Shooting, On Release, Comment
and Classic Scene
Jonathan Rigby - The Characters and Critique





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IN STOLEN FACE

AN EXCLUSIVE-ROBERT L. LIPPERT CO-PRODUCTION

Terence Fisher and Anthony Hinds tackled the tricky subject of reconstructive surgery long before *Frankenstein Created Woman*. **Jonathan Rigby** examines *Exclusive's Stolen Face*.

Alice Brent
Dr Philip Ritter
David
Dr Jack Wilson
Lily
Dr Russell
Betty
All
May
Pete
Cutter
Miss Patton
Lafy Harrington
Westwood

Lizabeth Scott
Paul Henreid
Andre Morell
John Wood
Mary Macintosh
Arnold Ridley
Susan Stephen
Cyril Smith
Diana Beaumont
Terence O'Riagan
Russell Napier
Ambrose Philips
Dorley Gugg
Richard Willis

Screenplay

Martin Berkeley
Richard H. Landau
based on an original story by
Alexander Paol, Steven Vos

Music composed by
Solo Pianist
Specialty Numbers
Director of Photography
Art Director
Editor
Continuity
Assistant Director
Camera Operator
Records
Make-Up
Casting
Producer
Director

Malcolm Arnold
Miss Bronwyn Jones
Jack Parnell
Walter Harvey
Wilfred Arnold
Maurice Kootes
Rene Glynn
Jimmy Sangster
Peter Heyan
Bill Saller
Philip Leachy
Nova Roberts
Anthony Hinds
Terence Fisher

Distributed by Exclusive (GB), Lippert (USA)

Certificate 'A'
Length 6.55h (est)
Duration 72 minutes

The Story

Dr Philip Ritter, a Harley Street plastic surgeon who alternates a lucrative private practice with charity work at a women's prison, is advised to take a holiday and in the process meets American concert pianist Alice Brent. They fall in love but Alice's manager, David, also happens to be her fiancé. When Alice leaves with David on a concert tour, the disappointed Philip remodels the disfigured face of Lily, one of his convict patients, into an exact replica of Alice. He proceeds to marry her, hoping to prove his theory that a beautiful new face will eradicate Lily's criminal tendencies. He soon discovers that beauty is only skin deep, after all. Lily and her dubious friends make his life hell, and when Alice returns with the news that David has nobly 'freed' her from her obligations, Philip's misery is complete. Lily discovers whose face Philip 'stole' and, when he is called away to Plymouth, she joins him on the train to frustrate what she takes to be a dirty weekend. Alice, feeling uneasy about Philip's desperate state, joins the train at Sutton and, in a struggle, Lily is accidentally thrown to her death, leaving Alice and Philip free to marry.



Lily Ah Z (Elizabeth Scott) discovers whose face Ritter (Paul Henreid) stole



Tony Hendt, Terence Fisher, Elizabeth Scott, Paul Henreid and an unidentified crew member discuss the production at Riverside Studios.

Background

In October 1951, Jack Leeswood, chief production supervisor of the Robert I. Lippert Organisation, crossed the Atlantic to study British production methods – Exclusive's *Deal on Course* (later retitled *Wings of Danger*) being the film in question. He also wanted, according to one trade paper of the day, to "minimise some of the 'basic objections' that American audiences found in British pictures. In American ears, apparently, some British artists have a tendency to slur dialogue. There is also the fact that certain English phrases are meaningless in America, or, worse still, have a completely different meaning." He brought with him the script of *Stolen Face*, which, being American, presumably presented none of the semantic problems about which Leeswood was so concerned. Filming began on the 22nd of the same month, not at Bray

"Austrian Paul Henreid, the son of a Swedish baron, was the distinguished star of Hollywood classics like *Casablanca* and *Now, Voyager*."

Studios, into which Exclusive had moved in January for the filming of *Cloudburst*, but at Hammer's Riverside Studios. It was Exclusive's eighth, and last, film made in 'Festival of Britain' year.

The fact that the synopsis (subsequently provided as a press release) differs so wildly from the actual plot-line points either to

substantial script revisions during production or to Exclusive's inadvertent use of the original story outline prepared by Steven Vos and James Carreras's regular collaborator, Alexander Paul. Amongst other anomalies, Lily only turns spiteful on discovering a photo of Alice in Philip's study – she needs no such encouragement in the finished film – and the railroad climax is precipitated by Philip's "dastardly scheme" to murder his disagreeable wife, of which there isn't even a hint in the final product. Also, Alice's fiancé David is described as American, which is hardly borne out by André Morell's indistinguishably English performance.

Morell, who went straight from *Stolen Face* to star with Donald Wolfit in the Old Vic production of *The Clouds of Mordant*, was making the first of nine appearances for Hammer, although his role here is decidedly subsidiary to the two American stars provided by Robert Lippert. Austrian Paul Henreid, the son of a Swedish baron, was the distinguished star of Hollywood classics like *Casablanca* and *Now, Voyager*. He was also a director; his first film, *For Men Only*, was

distributed by Exclusive shortly after *Stolen Face* was completed. His real name – Paul George Julius Henreid Ritter von Wessel-Waldingua – was coincidentally echoed in his character's name (Philip Ritter), and, according to continuity supervisor Renee Glynn, he enjoyed working for Exclusive so much that he could hardly wait to return the following year for *Montrap*. His last film was *Exorcist II: The Heretic*, and he died, aged 84, in 1992.

Elizabeth Scott, born Emma Matzo in 1922, had made a big impact in *You Come Along* and *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers*. On her arrival in England – bringing her costumes with her, courtesy of legendary Hollywood designer Edith Head – she was greeted by James Carreras and Richard Mealand, head of Paramount British. Gushed Picture Show, "Liz Scott, as you'll know, is called 'The Threat' – and for the first time in quite a time she's being given a chance to

threaten... For one facet of her rôle she has to speak in cockney. She recited a couple of her lines for me and, rather to my surprise, she was good..." (This is a matter of opinion.) Then I discovered that when she first knew she was in line for *The Stolen Face*, she sought out an English woman in Hollywood and took lessons. That is typical of her thorough approach... She's still a bachelor girl, though it is difficult to see why. A reporter quoted her as saying: 'I want someone to come home to, to share my life.' A studio worker, reading this out to me, said: 'She's 28 and she wants to marry. Blimey! We'll be having queues outside the studio every day when that gets round.' During her visit she found time to 'broadcast' on *It's Town Tonight* and to 'televise' on *Picture Page*; Paul

LIZABETH SCOTT HERE



On her arrival in England, Elizabeth Scott, the Hal Wallis star, is welcomed by James Carreras, of Exclusive Films, and Richard Mealand, head of Paramount British. Miss Scott is to star here with Paul Henreid in "THE STOLEN FACE" for Exclusive.

James Cameron
casts Paul Henreid
at Riverside



Henreid also did a spot of 'televising'.

Exclusive's family atmosphere was augmented when Renee Glynne was visited at Riverside by actress Maureen Glynne, niece of Renee's sister-in-law, the theatrical agent Valery Glynne. Maureen was judged to be so similar to Elizabeth Scott that she was signed up on the spot as her

The film had required more sets - 32 in all - than Exclusive had ever used before.

double, though she was only filmed in rear-view shots for the climactic train scenes in which Alice and Lily were required to appear together. The train interiors were mounted on 'rockers' and the time spent on these scenes helped to put the

film behind schedule. Anthony Hinds admitted that the film was "a bit behind for one reason or another - but not desperately." Due to finish on 10th November, the schedule was extended into the first week of December. The film had required more sets - 32 in all - than Exclusive had ever used before; also casting a shadow over the production, as it did over Ealing and other studios, was a 'work to rule' by the ACT (Association of Cine Technicians), the forerunner of today's BECTU.

On completion of the film, Tony Hinds suspended Exclusive's production programme temporarily, and spent Christmas in the US in reciprocation of Leewood's October visit. Elizabeth Scott also went to Hollywood - to appear in *Scared Stiff*, Martin and Lewis's lamp remake of the Bob Hope classic, *The Ghost Breakers*.

Stolen Face was given a trade show at the Rialto Theatre on 26th April 1952. "Plot is undeniably far-fetched and melodramatic," opined *Today's Cinema*, "but effectively exploits its fantastic central situation... Conventional direction; conscientious star personae; efficient production work. Fair popular entertainment, mainly appealing to women... None of it is to be taken too

seriously." According to *Picture Show*, "The story is well acted and has suspense... The stars make the best of their rôles and the settings are good but the film often lacks conviction." Previewed in Hollywood on 22nd May, 'Brog', in *Variety*, was less tolerant. "Pacing is laborious, though Paul Henreid and Elizabeth Scott supply some substance... and she is capable enough in both [rôles], considering the heavy-handed, slow direction by Terence Fisher. Henreid tries hard, and occasionally succeeds, in making his rôle acceptable. Miss Mackenzie is good and the others adequate... Picture's chances are mild."

Among the 'couch lines' Exclusive recommended to exhibitors were the following: "Her beauty masked an evil heart", "To capture love he cheated nature", "Beauty without - evil within", and the frankly revolting "To a beast was given beauty". Proof that Stolen Face prefigured Hammer's later horror films not only in subject matter but also in sensationalist publicity.

Critique

In *Stolen Face* we find yet again the 'split personality' so familiar from other pre-horror Hammer films like *Four Sided Triangle* and *Cloudburst*. "Horror films are the only kind which interest me," said Terence Fisher in 1952. "There's only one exception... but it's a very special one to me: I'd like to direct a love story, a real love story, simple and sentimental." Hardly surprising, then, that *Stolen Face* plays for all the world like a so-called 'woman's picture', lushly realised and unashamedly romantic. But it can't get away from the decidedly unhealthy implications of its own plot.

Any film predicated on the theme of 'Love Among the Plastic Surgeons' can't help but seem just a little kinky. *Stolen Face* has none of



Wood (John Wood), Betty (Susan Stephens) and Peter (Paul Henreid) speculate over Lily's post-operative appliances.

the surreal beauty of Franju's *Les Yeux Sans Visage* or the hysterical unpleasantness of Robert Harbord-Davis's *Corruption*, but it's impossible, nonetheless, to view it as a straight romantic drama. Who is Philip Ritter, and why does he feel compelled to mix his professional and personal lives in this disastrous fashion? "Did you catch the look in her eyes before she went under?" he dreamily enquires of a fellow surgeon early in the film, and from that point on we're worried about him. He's not a repugnant figure like Bill Leggett in *Four Sided Triangle* - who also tries to fashion a duplicate of a lost lover - just a tragically inhibited one. Paul Henreid's brilliantly restrained performance hints at a terrible weight of unrealised wishes behind the facade of professional zeal, but in the end we're left guessing as to their exact nature.

As in *The Revenge of Frankenstein*, Ritter is an artist-scientist who finances his experimental chimery work from the pockets of vain, ageing society women. As in *Frankenstein Created Woman*, he's an artist-scientist who takes a female 'low-life' and tries to turn her into a lady, producing instead a kind of monster. *Hounds of the Copper* also turns on this theme, which is derived pretty plainly from Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Ritter's Lily, however, has none of the charm of Higgins's Eliza Doolittle.

As played by Mary Mackenzie - her left cheek



The original Lily is affable enough, but once operated on and transformed into Elizabeth Scott, she becomes an avenging, working class harpy straight out of the worst bourgeois nightmare.

wardrobe favoured by Alice) and seems intended as a reactionary warning to all upright professional men not to mix with 'the lower orders'. However much you reconstruct their faces, boys, they'll remain just as ghastly as before! The film's notion of the underworld is a quaint one - Lily's gangster friend Pete is particularly unthreatening - but Ritter is sufficiently discomfited all the same. Lily is so nasty that at one point she makes the *Pygmalion* link explicit - the legendary *Pygmalion* having been a King of Cyprus who fell in love with his own statue of Venus - by taking Ritter's pre-operative sculpture of her 'stolen face' and spitefully smashing it to pieces.

Fisher's trademark horror elements - despite some suggestive moments as Lily's surgery gets underway - are not yet to the fore, so the film is by no means as frustrating as those later films, like *The Curse of the Werewolf*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and *The Gorgon*, in which he seems hell-bent on producing that cherished 'love story' rather than the horror subject he's actually

been given. But the film is too full of 1950s reticence to make full capital even of its romantic elements. Ritter's holiday idyll with Alice is charmingly rendered, but seems hardly passionate, while Alice's romance with David is hilariously sexless and go-laced. (André Morell can make nothing of this thankless role; nor, one suspects, could any actor.) And we're left entirely in the dark, of course, as to whether Ritter's hellish relationship with the resculpted Lily has any sexual compensations, either for him or her.

Even so, the film is beautifully photographed in luminous monochrome, benefits from appealing performances from its imported Hollywood stars, and provides an intriguing foretaste of the Hammer horrors to come.

"Did you catch the look in her eyes before she went under?" asks Ritter



BRITISH
HORROR
CLASSICS

The Creeping Flesh

While Hammer experimented with new ideas, other producers recreated the atmosphere of their finest films.

Jonathan Rigby celebrates a Cushing/Lee classic.

James Hilton
Crawford Wilson
Dorothea Wilson
Witcher
Leamy
Inspector
Gamm
Dr Perry
Carter
Emily
Young Assistant
Young Doctor
Harpuritz
Female Assistant
Saber
Where

Screenplay
Music composed by
Director of Photography
Art Director
Editor
Make-Up
Executive Producers
Producer
Director

Christopher Lee
Peter Cushing
Anna Holbrook
George Tasson
Kathleen J. Winters
Duncan Lamont
Henry Locke
Maggie Walker
Michael Pegg
Catherine Fain
Robert Searns
David Bellis
Jenny Ransome
Margaret Stone
Tony Wright
Alexander Dore

Peter Spence
Jonathan Farnfield
Paul Ferris
Norman Farnfield
George Farnfield
Donald Hayschick
Roy Ashton
Norman Farnfield
Tony Farnfield
Michael Farnfield
Freddie Farnfield

A Titan Sound/Wall to Wall Studios production
Directed by Peter Cushing
Columbia TriStar
Length 88 min
Dolby Stereo 5.1

The Story

1893. Anthropologist Emmanuel Hildern returns home from New Guinea, his eyes on the £10,000 Richter prize. He has discovered, at a lower level than Neanderthal man, a super-sophisticated skeleton of giant proportions, which he takes to be the 'Evil One' of ancient prophecy - not scheduled to be thrust above ground, however, for another 3,000 years. Beginning to wash the skeleton, he finds that water causes it to take on flesh. He removes the offending, reconstituted finger and pickles it.

His embittered half-brother James, who runs a lunatic asylum and covets the Richter prize for himself, informs Emmanuel that his wife Marguerite has finally died, having been committed to the asylum years before. Emmanuel has concealed the truth about Marguerite from their daughter Penelope, but she now discovers the subterfuge and flies into a rage. Distracted, Emmanuel leaps to the conclusion that Penelope is showing signs of the mania attributed so long ago to Marguerite. With incredible rashness, he prepares an 'anti-evil' serum from the skeleton's living digit and injects it into Penelope's bloodstream. Burning away, she is molested by three disagreeable men in succession, one of whom she maims while killing the other two. The last was an escapee from James's asylum, and soon Penelope is incarcerated there herself.

Having analysed Penelope's blood, James determines to uncover the secrets of Emmanuel's laboratory. Soon the hi-jacked skeleton is rushed away in a coach, James sitting calmly beside it. A storm begins, the coach crashes, James runs off to get help, and the torrential rain gives life to the skeleton. Penelope, who has been returned to Emmanuel's care, lets the Evil One into the house. Insane with fear, Emmanuel throws the creature's disembodied finger on the fire; when they finally meet, it tears off one of his fingers in recompense. Emmanuel and Penelope end up in James's asylum; James denies any family connection and wins the Richter prize. Emmanuel's warnings, meanwhile - that he has inadvertently unleashed embodied evil on the world - go unheeded.

Background

As 1971 gave way to 1972, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee were seeing a great deal of each other. *Dracula* AD 1972 occupied September and October, then - pausing only for Cushing to polish off *Fear in the Night* and Dr Phibes Rises Again during November - they were both off to Madrid in mid-December for Poncio on El Transiberiano (*Horror Express*). Barely two months later they were re-united at Shepperton Studios for *The Creeping Flesh*.

27-year old independent producer Michael Redbourn, a former dubbing editor for *Antics*, had purchased the rights to the property in January 1971, but was content to bide his time for a while year to ensure, as he put it, that "All the elements were just right". The availability of Cushing and Lee was obviously uppermost in his mind. As director Freddie Francis later pointed out, "The two of them together really work. I mean, if you want to make horror films... you can't do



Left: Peter Cushing as Emmanuel Hildern. Right: Christopher Lee as James Hildern. The skeleton is the 'Evil One' of ancient prophecy.

Below: Peter Cushing as Emmanuel Hildern. Right: Christopher Lee as James Hildern. The skeleton is the 'Evil One' of ancient prophecy.

better than Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. They have a wonderful chemistry on screen."

The Hammer look was further bolstered by the presence of Roy Ashton as make-up artist and the casting of Hammer regulars Duncan Lamont and Michael Ripper. Welsh-born George Benson was delightfully cast as the ill-fated Waterlow; he too would be familiar to Hammer fans as the self-important frontier guard in Terence Fisher's *Dracula*. Australian actor Kenneth J. Warren (1929-1973), who provided a wordless but nonetheless eloquent performance as escaped lunatic Lenny, had just completed *Demons of the Mind* for Hammer. He had arrived in England in 1957 and his genre appearances included *Circus of Horrors*, *Dr Blood's Coffin* and *I, Monster*. Scots actress Leona Hellbron had come to prominence playing opposite Dudley Moore in the 1969 West End production of Woody Allen's *Play It Again, Sam*; a year after her outstanding performance in *The Creeping Flesh*, she would be brutally stabbed to death by Angela Pleasence in Jose Larraz's *Carnes Film Festival* selection, *Symptoms*.

Location shooting was undertaken near Tower Bridge and at Thorpe (near Egham), in Surrey. The lush interior settings were adapted by art director George Provis from sets left over from *The House That Dripped Blood* (1970). "That film had great style", Francis accurately recalled. "One of the reasons for that was because it was produced by a very dear friend of mine, Norman Priggen... [who] didn't know anything about horror films; he just knew about producing good films... It wasn't the usual unit of people who were regularly attached to the horror film. It was pure chemistry. It was just one of those things that clicked when put together." Other vital contributors to the film's "chemistry" were Norman Warwick, who was working as director of photography for Francis (himself a brilliant DP) for the seventh time in five years, and composer Paul Ferris, who had previously scored (and acted in) *Witchfinder General*.

Although Peter Cushing expressed misgivings about the film's imperfect resolution of its plot elements, Christopher Lee echoed the director in his appreciation of the finished product: "The Creeping Flesh, made with Peter as sparring partner (which always seems to generate a better atmosphere than when we're on the same side) was a beautifully mounted Victorian period horror tale." Lee had taken time out during the

The lush interior settings were adapted by art director George Provis from sets left over from *The House That Dripped Blood*. "That film had great style", Francis accurately recalled.



March 1972, and Cushing, Lee and Stephens gather for a *Sherlock Holmes* reunion

making of the film to spend a single Saturday morning on Gary Sherman's remarkable *Death Line*, (of which, however, Lee did not approve). Shot at Shepperton alongside *The Creeping Flesh* was Peter Newbrook's horror-thriller, *The Asphyx*. Robert Stephens took time out from the shooting of that film to visit Cushing and Lee, and publicity shots were taken of the three famous Sherlock Holmeses gathered around Lee's desk in the Hildren Institute for the Criminally Insane.

The film's appearance, in February 1973, marked one of those rare occasions when British critics actually had some kind words for a British horror film... *The Guardian* - "Good, solid work from Freddie Francis... a technician who invariably takes more care than most in the genre with storyline and trappings. Messrs Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee benefit from the treatment." *The Sunday Times* - "It employs the twin pillars of our native horror cinema... As a matter of fact, I thought Mr Cushing gave one of his best performances; and the screenplay, too, was on a higher level of invention than usual."

Film Illustrated - "Horror fans will welcome this, very much a return in class and style to the early Hammer films... The feel of the woodland scenes is more Danish or Swedish than English... and the period is flawlessly caught, intangibly as well as in plain view... Cushing's cultured performance looks even better within a strong storyline, and Lorna Heilbron is excellent as the repressed daughter."

The Creeping Flesh was released simultaneously in the US (as support to William A. Fraker's *A Reflection of Fear*), where commentators were similarly impressed. *Village Voice* noted that "The Creeping Flesh is directed with unexpected sensitivity and sophistication", and *Variety* - though feeling that the film "ticks too much like a grandfather clock to make the foliages quiver" - went on to say that "The entire production is professionally crafted and the cast is tops, exploiting to the fullest their 1-D characters without a hint of camp." *Cinefantastique* was somewhat sniffer: "Early on the screenplay..."

goes off on a tangent... [as if] having thought up a good idea for a new type of screen monster, the filmmakers were at a loss what to do with it, for the film ends, somewhat disappointingly, without resolving the monster's fate or whereabouts." That, surely, was the whole point... World Film Service executives were very much taken by the finished film, and - bypassing the project's prime mover, Michael Redgrave - invited Freddie Francis to develop a further project. The result was the humdrum *Tales That Witness Madness*.

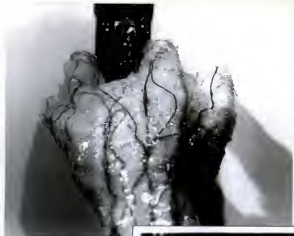
There was to be no let-up for those "twin pillars", either. Cushing moved on to *Asylum* in April, followed in May by another encounter with Lee - this time for Lee's own production company - in *Nothing But the Night*. By Christmas 1972 they were back together yet again in *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*, each having made two further films in the interim - *And Now the Screaming Starts* and *Frankenstein and the Monster From Hell* for Cushing; *Dark Places* and *The Wicker Man* for Lee. A punishing schedule by anyone's standards...

Critique

Though not a Hammer film, *The Creeping Flesh* represents a nostalgic return to the sumptuous period-set Hammer horrors of the late fifties. With the virtual extinction of the British film industry just around the corner, and *The Exorcist* on release in the USA in the same year, it seems an obvious emblem of the end of an era.

The film begins with Emmanuel Hildren, confined to an asylum, putting the finishing touches to a poor man's Salvador Dali picture, then unravels in flashback as Hildren and his assistant Waterlow - with agreeable and unmistakable echoes of Holmes and Watson - investigate "the most sensational scientific discovery of the century." Hildren, in





tragically characteristic fashion, leaps to some outrageous conclusions, seemingly derived from a close reading of HIP Lovecraft. He immediately waxes Messianic - "I am the White God. I alone hold this tremendous power of Good and Evil in my hands." The skeleton, meanwhile - in an ominous series of probing close-ups - seems to lie in silent mockery of his absurd pretensions. It seems aware, in fact, of the other skeleton in Hildem's life, the one in his cupboard; or, rather, in the perfectly preserved bedroom of his late wife.

For Hildem's instability is not confined to the laboratory. His marriage is revealed to us in a rather clumsy and unpersuasive flashback, in which 'La Belle Marguerite' takes more and more extra-curricular lovers and goes insane as the seemingly inevitable consequence. It's here that misconceptions have arisen. Robin Wood talks of "the somewhat squalid bourgeois morality which ... [equates] with evil ... all displays of energy or overt sexuality", and even the normally perceptive David Pirie describes Penelope, maddened by her father's 'anti-Evil' serum, as "an incarnation of female libido".

But the equation is obviously all in Hildem's overheated mind, since the flashback is seen only from his point of view. And Penelope becomes

Penelope becomes not an incarnation of rampant sexuality, but on the contrary, an ultra-violent exemplar of the sexual repression Hildem so cherishes. To safeguard her own purity she savages any male (odd, sailor lunatic) who comes near her.

Equating evil with extreme violence seems reasonable, but perhaps critics have been misled by the 'scarlet woman' dress she wears in these rather hackneyed tavern scenes. Or by the inescapably phallic nature of

the skeleton's newly-fleshed finger, which pulses obscenely of its own accord when Hildem is about to throw it on the fire. Hildem's revulsion for this horrid appendage is certainly intriguing - his immediate reaction at first sight of it is to take up a castrating chisel and chop it off.

The asylum sub-plot provides a grimly ironic parallel to Hildem's domestic difficulties: the two half-brothers are both despotic in their different ways. James ruthlessly so with his inmates and Emmanuel benevolently so with the sheltered Penelope. The whole thing builds to a grandly Gothic climax, a lightning-flashing tour de force (closely modelled, perhaps, on the runaway coach finale of Robert Wise's *The Body Snatcher*), in which director Freddie Francis pulls out all the stops. It's done with such gusto, and such infectious relish for the accumulated clichés, that Hildem's long-delayed appointment with the Evil One takes on a genuinely alarming inevitability. Here Francis repeats a gag he used in *The Skull* seven years



STYLING: PETER JONES. MAKEUP: JANE HARRISON. HAIR: PETER JONES. COSTUME DESIGNER: JANE HARRISON. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: JANE HARRISON. EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS: JANE HARRISON, PETER JONES. PRODUCED BY: JANE HARRISON. WRITTEN BY: JANE HARRISON. DIRECTED BY: JANE HARRISON.

earlier, in which the terrified Hildem is seen through the blood-oozing eye-sockets of the thing as it exacts its terrible revenge. A finger may seem a paltry tribute, but with it, as the epilogue makes clear, goes Hildem's reputation and the last shreds of his sanity; a spectacularly bleak, and genuinely moving, conclusion to a warped family saga.

The film is beautifully designed and imaginatively directed, with an especially spine-chilling score. The screenplay is unusually ambitious in scope, and it is brilliantly acted. Lorna Heilbron is appealingly unstable as Penelope and goes completely mad with teeth-baring relish. Christopher Lee plays Hildem's thoroughly disagreeable half-brother with a steel and below-zero emotional coldness that chills the blood. And Peter Cushing is at his most porcelain as the pathetic Emmanuel - his heart-breaking vulnerability in this rôle perhaps deriving from the very recent death of his own wife.

The *Crawling Flesh* seems ripe for re-appraisal as a late-blooming classic of the golden age of British horror.

+

Andy Black samples the current crop of horror video releases.

Considering that this was such a notorious case which rocked the moral climate of Edwardian society, the film's strength and

Rather uncharitably derided by his wife as being a "pill-peddler" and by the police for having "cod-fish eyes", Crippen's introverted nature is completely at odds with the exhibitionist outpourings of his overbearing wife, who seeks physical and emotional solace in the arms of numerous male acquaintances. As Crippen himself observes, "Love to her was a matter of appetite" whilst for Crippen "love" is a fanciful, pure emotion found within the embracing arms of his alluring mistress Ethel.

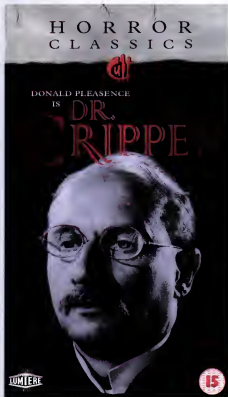
Although at first the coquettish Ethel appears more impressed by Clippen's generous gifts and the excitement of their illicit romance than any deeper attraction, her mournful presence outside the prison gates after his execution points to a more genuine love. This is a finely-judged performance from Eggar, who is better known for her rôle in *The Collector* alongside Terence Stamp, and to horror fans for literally giving birth to 'the children of her race' in *The Brood*.

Crippen's gradual sedation of his lusty wife by sprinkling a narcotic into her drinks may have appeared "harmless" to him but his "accidental" overdose ultimately leads to her death and his subsequent escape to America with Ethel.

This latter episode, in which Crippen tries in vain to pass a stiff-suited Ethel off as his son aboard ship, perhaps best illustrates the faithful but misguided illusions he is suffering from, whilst also physically symbolising the emotional straitjacket he appears to be fettered by.

Any lasting doubts as to whether this gentle man really concealed a beast within are seemingly dissolved during the emotional denouement as Crippen selflessly thanks his guards for their courtesy towards him, and implores the prison governor to befriend Ethel and encourage her to forget him. Surely not the actions of a monster.

This lingering impression is aided by the casting of Pleasence in a rôle which virtually demanded his presence. His is a sympathetic and humane portrayal of a much-maligned man.



DR CRIPPEN

Lumiere Pictures

Sell-through release 22nd May

Robert Lynn's pathos-inducing film about the real-life killer features one of the late Donal Plence's finest performances. Plence was ideally suited to play the timid, self-effacing Hawley Harvey Crippen - accused of murdering his belligerent wife Belle (Coral Browne) in order to live freely with his mistress Ethel Le Neve (Samantha Eggar).

"The murderous work of a veritable monster in human form" is how the prosecutor sums up the beleaguered doctor in court, and this assertion is pivotal to the film as we are asked to question





WHITE ANGEL

Polygram Video
Rental release 7th May

Every once in a while there comes along a brief, heartwarming glow of optimism and promise from the wizened wastes of the British film "industry". *White Angel* may be one such momentary flash of inspiration.

At the tender age of nineteen, fledgling producer Genevieve Jolliffe simultaneously became the youngest ever film producer and youngest ever female film producer, earning instant recognition in the Guinness Book of Records.

First-time director Chris Jones, himself only twenty-four, received funding from The Prince's Trust to help bankroll this serial-killer film which draws obvious inspiration from both *The Silence of the Lambs*, with its transvestite murderer, and *Henry - Portrait of a Serial Killer* with its verité style.

As the vocally-challenged Inspector Taylor (Don Henderson) bumbles around trying to ensnare the titular killer (earning the sobriquet for his/her propensity to stalk blonde-haired and white-clad victims) the real drama revolves around one-time successful crime writer Ellen Carter (Harriet Robinson) and her new lodger, the seemingly mild-mannered dentist Leslie Steckler (Peter Firth).

It doesn't take Sherlock Holmes to deduce that Steckler is none other than the 'White Angel' killer. Although his secret is known to Ellen, she herself is paralysed by fear and guilt, having herself previously killed and with her late husband now walked up inside her house.

The psychological cat-and-mouse games continue, as both are unable to involve the authorities in respect of each other's crimes for fear of then implicating themselves. To add to the tension, Steckler cajoles Ellen to act as his literary and video biographer as he unburdens his own guilt upon her in an act of conscious self-revelation. Steckler imparts to Ellen in rather

fanciful fashion, "Can't you see the divine perfection? You and I are carved from the same stone. It will be the perfect partnership - your words, my story."

The most disquieting image among all of the cathartic disclosures from Steckler remains the home video footage he plays to Ellen detailing his abject humiliation at the hands of his domineering wife. Her cruel jibes concerning his impotence result in his decidedly phallic dispatch of her by repeated stabbing with a long knife. The psychological probing then continues with Steckler's obsession with the colour white. Is it a latent fixation stemming from his wife's refusal to wear white during their wedding, or is it a representation to him of a purity which he cannot tolerate?

There's a deliberate attempt by director Jones to cultivate a sense of real panic in true Jack the Ripper style with Steckler as the unseen assailant stalking innocent women through the streets of London. The grainy point of view sequences as Steckler beguiles his victims into a false sense of security before suddenly striking are eerily effective, especially as the alluring sight of one victim in the requisite white dress and stilettos then jump-cuts to the horrific sight of her mutilated body. The juxtaposition of up-tempo guitar music merged with desolate, melancholy discords, serves to reinforce the disorienting images we see as Steckler claims his victims.

Only Steckler's own accoutrements, his *modus operandi* if you prefer, of wig, lipstick, mascara, dress and heels are not fully developed - are they simply a disguise for his homicidal acts or are they an expression of a particular fetish? Or perhaps a combination of both?

Whatever you decide, this is certainly an assured debut from Jones with an entirely functional, if sometimes convoluted plot, which is lent a certain amount of verisimilitude by a sombre, almost ethereal atmosphere to Steckler's atrocities.

The single most disturbing aspect to the film, however, remains the macabre coincidence of its location being a mere mile away from the very real atrocities committed at a certain 25 Cromwell Street. The activities of the late Fred West only came to light after the film's completion, and remain a genuine example of truth being stranger than fiction.

THE SECT

Guild Home Video
Rental release 5th April

Another in the Italian series of films produced by Dario Argento but directed by the possible successor to his throne, Michele Soavi. *The Sekt* borrows some of the arcane alchemy and sinister architecture of their earlier collaboration, *The Church*, yet infuses the action with an ethereal ambience to create a flawed yet fascinating thriller. If you can imagine the oppressive, cloying claustrophobia of *Rosemary's Baby* injected with the feral imagination and visual clan of *Inferno* then you are part-way to understanding this enthralling work.

Miriam (Kelly Lee Curtis) believes herself to be an ordinary schoolteacher working in the eerie, fairy tale milieu she inhabits on the outskirts of Frankfurt. Enter the ancient Herbert Lom, a seminal member of 'The Sect of the Faceless Ones' - an occultist group whose ritualistic sacrifices reach a frenzy with the subsequent revelation that Miriam is in fact playing 'host' to the cult's own demonic offspring.

OK, so it's not the most convincing premise upon which to thread a cogent demonic tale, but Soavi pulls it off thanks to the (mainly) subdued performances and the portentous atmosphere which prevails.

Virtually every frame bleeds a shimmering blue light, bathing the characters in an imaginary metaphysical aura which is later made flesh, or water at least, in an azure pool at the bottom of a well concealed in the basement of Miriam's cabin.

The sleeping Miriam is first impregnated by a sacred scarab beetle which burrows itself up her nose. She later experiences



a succession of hallucinatory dreams in which she is clad in virginal white only to be attacked/impregnated by a rapacious demon bird. The very real manifestation of this during the climax sees Miriam's 'child' born. 'You're not here to die, you're here to give life' she is informed.

However, it's not the plot mechanics which raise this film above the mere flotsam and jetsam of most contemporary horror output, but the stylish flourishes from Sorvi which embellish his work. Take his audacious point of view shot as Miriam stares down a rattling water pipe, whereupon the foraging camera tracks every turn, every angle, every length of pipe as it submerges into the beckoning well before later emerging from whence it came – namely, in Miriam's inquisitive gaze.

The subtextual religious references prevalent here are most memorably displayed as the hysterical Katryn (Marta Angela Giordano) finds Lom's discarded cloth, which still bears the contours of his face. In a macabre twist it then binds itself to her face – a somewhat obscure reminder of the Turin Shroud and other such religious icons. It obviously has a powerful (if not divine) effect as we next see Katryn inviting a truck driver to stab her repeatedly. Her apparent demise upon the hospital operating table is temporarily stalled as her bloodied form rises Lazarus-like and nearly kills the terrified Miriam in the process. For actress Angela Giordano, this is just another in a long line of visceral rôles, presaged by her having a breast gnawed in Andrea Bianchi's zombie-fest *Burial Ground* and a leg hacked off in Mario Landi's *Thriller in Venice*.

Sorvi's most singular moment is reserved for one of the cult's unfortunate victims: metal hooks are attached to her face, which, on the ceremonial cry of "I turn the key", are viciously twisted. Her facial skin is teased away from the bone in *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* fashion. Not pleasant.

In addition to these decidedly nauseous moments, we also have the continual Freudian psycho-babble/symbolism of Miriam's incubation of the cult's offspring. This is coupled with repeated shots of the labyrinth pipework, and the inviting

receptacle of the archaic well which serves as the sexual metaphor for Miriam's occultist impregnation.

A far (and welcome) cry from the all too familiar teens in peril, slice and dice features, and a sumptuously filmed experience you would be wise not to miss out on.

7/10

BLOODSTAINED SHADOW

Redemption Video

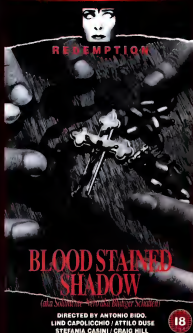
Sell-through release 24th April

Along with *The Cat's Victim*, this is another one of Antonio Bido's giallo films recently released by Redemption. *Bloodstained Shadow* is a competent but unstartling entry, whose more accomplished moments seem derivative of Dario Argento's classic *Deep Red*.

Stefano (Lino Capolicchio) returns home to the picturesque setting of Venice (although here Bido manages to relegate such a colourful city to a dreary, peacock grey) whereupon his close relationship with Sandra (Stefania Casini) becomes secondary as a killer stalks the waterways.

As the assassin carries out nefarious work with the de rigueur black-gloved hands glimpsed, a succession of unwholesome characters meet their demise. The bloodbath culminates with the murder of Sandra's own wheelchair-bound mother, whose surreal paintings eventually enable Stefano to guess another killer's identity.

Typical of this particularly virulent Italian sub-genre, the convoluted plotting is decidedly throwaway. It is the triumph of style over content upon which these films rely. But although Bido exhibits some style, it's nowhere near enough. Some of the murders are filmed with a certain capricious verve – most impressively, a haunting slow-motion strangulation in the opening frames – but Bido is simply too reliant on Argento moves in order to flesh out his film. So, the surrealist painting



which is intrinsic to the maestro's film also occurs in Bido's, incriminating one of the film's dual killers (another Deep Red plot conceit). For the professor who is knifed in Argento's epic, Bido has the spearing to death of the child-molesting Count Pedrazzi (Massimo Serato), whilst the elongated demise of one victim dragged along by a trailer is mirrored in Bido's film as a doctor is pulled behind a motor-boat to a similar death by decapitation.

As if this wasn't enough, Stelvio Cipriani's Goblin-esque score also utters a few Argento-style melodies, most blatantly during the stalking of a priest Paolo (Craig Hill) as Deep Red's famous pounding fugue is reprised to maximum effect.

Where Bido does manage to inject some tension into the proceedings is in an impressive sequence where Sandra is chased through a maze of narrow, claustrophobic alleyways, before eventually escaping unscathed.

For a more inspiring, thought-provoking prow through the streets of Venice I'd suggest Nic Roeg's *Don't Look Now*, or the definitive Venetian giallo, Aldo Lado's mesmerising *Who Saw Her Die?*



SPIRITS OF THE DEAD

Arrow Films

Sell-through release 30th May

"Horror and fatality have been stalking abroad in all ages. Why then give a date to a story I have to tell?" This opening quotation from Edgar Allan Poe expands his own philosophy whilst also indicating to the viewer just what to expect in this anthology adapted from Poe's work. As the timeless propensity of horror is spotlighted here, who better to illustrate the point than three of the cinema's own timeless figures – Roger Vadim, Louis Malle and Federico Fellini.

The jagged rocks and spectacular coastline of Brittany form the basis for Vadim's *'Metzengerstein'* which showcases his then wife Jane Fonda as Frederica, a tyrannical figure who "ruled capriciously" from her castle lair during the medieval age and is rightly likened to being a 'Lady Caligula'. She is, however, perhaps just a short step away from being a Countess Bathory – witness the poignant shot of Frederica framed next to a victim hanging from a gibbet in the background.

Her decadent life of hedonistic pursuits, orgies and bouts of cruelty is shattered after meeting her neighbouring cousin Wilhelm (Peter Fonda, in fact), to whom she is instantly attracted. Having spurned her advances ("I have no wish to join your menagerie") Frederica then extracts her revenge on him by having his stables set alight.

Disaster ensues, however, as Wilhelm himself dies whilst attempting to save his horses. A majestic black stallion then appears mysteriously in Frederica's courtyard the next morning, and her attachment to the animal leaves her pondering whether the spirit of Wilhelm has been transferred into the horse...

Vadim concentrates on his wife, as Frederica changes with effortless ease from seductive lace and leather costumes to thigh-high boots as if it were a dry run for the even more spectacular fashions in the following year's *Barbarella*. To be fair to Vadim though, his roving camera lens also brings the verdant landscape to life, even if it is ultimately undermined by the film's melancholy tone.

Louis Malle's interpretation of 'William Wilson' was actually missing from the release of this film I bought a few years ago from a minor video label, but is thankfully restored here.

Alain Delon plays the title character, an officer in the Austrian army forever haunted throughout his life by a mysterious 'double' who bears the same name. Delon's opening run through narrow cobbled streets is intercut with the slow-motion fall to death of a mysterious figure. This effective opening gives way to Wilson's demands to give his confession to a local priest. In flashback, we learn of the cruel behaviour which dominates his character – taunting one boy at school by

Spirits of the Dead

18



Three macabre tales by EDGAR ALLEN POE

Directed by ROGER VADIM

LOUIS MALLE and FEDERICO FELLINI

Starring BRIGITTE BARDOT, ALAIN DELON,

TERENCE STAMP and JANE & PETER FONDA

suspending him on a rope over a vat full of rodents, at medical school by almost performing an impromptu heart operation on a terrified young girl he has dragged in off the street and, ultimately, cheating at cards to win his prize of Josephine (Brigitte Bardot), whom he then callously whips before 'offering her' to the other officers present. In each instance, his final act of brutality is curtailed with the sudden appearance of his double.

A thought-provoking concept, which is neatly handled by Malle but which would have benefited from greater screen-time to develop its characters.

Fellini's 'Toby Dammit', very liberally adapted from Poe's punning 'Don't Wage Your Blood to the Devil', is the most satisfying of the three tales. Interspersed as it is with some typically out-of-Fellini characters and visual elegance. Terence Stamp plays the main figure – a British actor invited to Italy to star in a new spaghetti western for which, besides being paid, he is collecting a gift of a new Ferrari. Having blundered his way through the paparazzi at the airport, assorted television interviewers and an awards ceremony, Stamp eagerly collects his car and takes it for a night-time spin.

Although the mixture of alcohol and his recurring nightmares of a strange little girl bouncing a ball towards him may not be conducive to safe driving, he is soon roaring around each corner and village square he meets before stopping abruptly near the edge of a precipice on a half-constructed bridge.

Deciding he can rev the engine and traverse the imposing gap to land onto the opposite side, we see the flash of headlights and hear the screech of tyres as he attempts the jump...

Given the nature of the directors involved, *Spirits of the Dead* is the kind of classy horror outing you would expect. It ultimately lacks enough visceral thrills to satisfy the less discerning horror fan, but if you can take this consideration on board then it's well worth discovering this minor gem.





Who Were

Keith Dudley's behind-the-scenes series continues with some of the directors entrusted with the company's later, and most lavish, productions.

PETER SYKES

"We would be letting the audience's imagination do the work, which you couldn't do if you were just really frightening them. You don't have to pamper [their] senses into submission, just draw them out very slowly to the edge of their seats..."

— Peter Sykes



This page:
Peter Sykes at work on
Demons of the Mind

Over the page:
Sykes (facing
Christopher Lee)
supervises location
filming of *To Live
With the Devil*... a *Dracula*

A native of Melbourne, Australia, Peter Sykes was born on 17th June 1939. He acted with the Melbourne Repertory Theatre after a brief career as a dancer, and would later cut his teeth as an assistant director on documentaries and children's shows for Australian television.

Upon his arrival in England in 1963, Sykes joined ATV, again as an assistant, but soon progressing to director; his *Wuthering* to *Carnegie* would be awarded a prize at Sydney's International Film Festival. He came to the attention of ABC producer Brian Clemens, who was looking for fresh directors to work on his cult TV show *The Avengers*. Sykes would direct two segments from the series's final season of 1968-9; *Love All*, and a



well-received *High Noon* pastiche, *Noon-Doomsday*.

Forsaking television, Sykes became a freelance director. After making cult film *The Committee* with Paul Jones and Pink Floyd, he travelled to Germany to shoot the independently produced British film *Venom*, a thriller starring Sheila Keith and Simon Reent. *Venom* caught the eye of Hammer's incoming managing director, Michael Carreras, who duly contracted Sykes to direct *Demons of the Mind*, an intriguing psychological thriller scripted by Christopher Wicking from a story by producer Frank Godwin.

Moving on to EMI/Associated Films shortly thereafter, Sykes directed *Die Laughing* and *The House in Nightmare Park*, a comedy-horror written by Clive Eaton and Terry Nation as a vehicle for star Frankie Howerd. Upon completion of *Nightmare Park*, Sykes moved directly into production of *Stephanie and Son* *Ride Again*, EMI's second motion-picture spin-off from the successful BBC sitcom.

After co-scripting the feature film *Beware of the Darkness* and directing *Eddie and the Lucky Salt Peanuts* in 1974, Sykes returned to Hammer Films in 1975 to take on the company's third Dennis Wheatley adaptation, *To the Devil... a Daughter*. Sykes was brought in as an eleventh-hour substitute for Don Sharp, who had pulled out after the film's planned starting date had been delayed. Many had been considered for the job at various stages of pre-production, including Michael Apted, Don Chaffey, Alan Gibson, Silvio Marziano, Peter Sasdy



Hammer?

The evil power of black magic has fascinated millions of cinema-goers. First... "Rosemary's Baby." Then... "The Exorcist." And now a motion picture that probes further into the mysteries of the occult than any has dared before!

Dennis Wheatley's "TO THE DEVIL... A DAUGHTER."



and Michael Techner, but all had proved to be either unavailable or unenthusiastic. Michael Carreras had favoured Sykes from the outset; after Sharp's departure, Carreras sent a memo to the film's producers which read, "I would again urge you to seriously consider Peter Sykes who I believe would do a first-class imaginative

job of direction, whilst at all times retaining a responsibility towards schedule and budget. To my mind he is ideally suited to the subject and on the threshold of becoming an important director for the future."

However, the film's troubled production led to Sykes being outvoted when it came to determining its precise conclusion. The film failed to make the desired impact at the box-office upon its release in March 1976; Sykes headed for France in 1977, where he worked on the TV series *Magicians of the Future* before going to Israel, where he co-directed (with John Krish) a straightforward Bible narrative, *Jouru*. Later he would helm *Alexander the Great* for Video Arts/Time Life, and would return to England in the early 1980s to direct the critically-acclaimed Channel 4 series, *The Irish RM*. Other credits from this period include *The Lost Secret* for the BBC and *The Defectors* for Video Arts. Sykes has since made documentaries for both the European Broadcasting Commission and the IBA.

**THE BIG ONE
FOR 1967 A.D.
IS GOING TO BE**

ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.

ONE MILLION YEARS B.C. RAQUEL WELCH • JOHN RICHARDSON
PERCY HERBERT • ROBERT BROWN MARTINE BESNICK



The Daily Cinema, 12th December 1965

DON CHAFFEY

— *Parry Welch*

Shooting One Million Years BC with costar John Richardson

Chailley's next project was the ambitious Columbia/Charles H. Schneer version of *Jonah and the Argonauts*, one of the best films to feature the stop-motion animation of Ray Harryhausen. Soon afterwards, Hammer approached Harryhausen with a proposal to remake *It's a Wonderful Life*: a prehistoric epic, *One Million BC*. Chailley shot much of this complex blend of live-action and model work, re-titled *One Million Years BC*, in the Canary Islands. With the unforgettable image of star Raquel Welch in a fuji-lined bikini making magazine covers worldwide, the film would become an international box-office hit. Chailley stayed with Hammer to direct 1967's *The Viking Queen*, an expensive historical adventure aimed



primarily at the family market. Once again, he shot overseas, in and around Eire's Ardmore Studios.

Television beckoned in the late 1960s: Chaffley would handle episodes of Patrick McGeehan's allegorical cult classic *The Prisoner* (*Arrest!*), the *Chimes of Big Ben*, *Dance of the Dead* and *Chickadee* and ABC's fantasy adventure series *The Avengers* (*Legacy of Death*, *Whu You Were Here*, *Stay Tuned*, *Requiem* and *Who Was That Man I Saw You With*). He would return to Hammer to direct *Creatures the World Forgot*, another primitive-man escapade made upon the insistence of Columbia after the success of *One Million Years BC*. Produced and scripted by Michael Carreras, the film's South African location shoot would prove to be long and arduous.

In 1976, Chaffley handled Disney's Australian adventure, *Ride a Wild Pony*. He would work on many more family-orientated pictures over the next few years, including Disney's *Pete's Dragon*, *CHOMPS*, and TV movies *The Magic of Lassie: The Gift of Love and Lassie: The New Beginning*. American television networks also employed him on series such as *Charlie's Angels*, *Vegas*, *Fantasy Island* and *T J Hooker*. He made his final film, the TV movie *International Airport*, in 1985. Don Chaffley died in 1992, aged 85.

JOHN HOUGH

"I don't think Hammer is dead. A long sleep, maybe, but it will be back."

— John Hough

Born in London on 21st November 1941, John Hough entered the film industry straight from school as a sound engineer with a London studio. After attending a college course for film technicians, he joined Associated Television as an assistant director.

While working at ATV as a producer Hough was invited to direct four episodes of *The Avengers* (*The Super-Secret Cypher Snatch*, *The Morning After*, *Fog and Horns* and *Old Lace*), which in turn led to an offer from Lew Grade's ITC to direct instalments of its Roger Moore series *The Saint*. Now firmly established in television, in 1969 Hough was invited by Hammer Films to direct *Wolfhead* — the *Legend of Robin Hood*, a fifty-minute short that Michael Carreras had hoped would pilot a potential TV series. Beset with post-production problems, the film was eventually released in 1972 as a support feature.

Hough's first fully-fledged feature film was the ITC thriller *Eyewitness*, a fast-paced vehicle for young Mark (Diver?) Lester shot on location in Malta. In Spring 1971 Hough returned to Hammer to helm



the third and final film of their interlinked Karnstein trilogy, *Twins of Evil*. Seen by some as the most elaborate of this series, *Twins of Evil* established Hough as a horror director.

Following the success of his vampire piece, Hough was called upon to complete the long-delayed *Treasure Island*. This international co-production had started life in 1964: Drson Welles had originally co-scripted, part-directed, and starred as Long John Silver in this version of the Robert Louis Stevenson classic. After Welles fell ill with a gall-bladder infection and subsequently lost interest in the project, second unit director Jess Franco was asked to complete location work. The picture went on hiatus sometime during 1965; Hough was brought in by producer Harry Allan Towers to bring the film up to 95 minutes duration. 1973 saw Hough take on haunted-house horror *The Legend of*



Hell House, a well-received chiller that won him the USA's Premier Prize of Film Fantasy. Later that year, Hollywood beckoned with an offer to direct Peter Fonda and Susan George in the road movie *Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry*, a picture that grossed over \$100m for the studio and catapulted Hough to the top. For Disney, Hough handled *Escape to Witch Mountain* and its sequel, *Return from Witch Mountain*, the latter starring Christopher Lee and Bette Davis. He would work with Davis again on Disney's *The Watcher in the Woods*. Other Hollywood projects of this period included *The Fox Club*, *To Kill a Coddler* and *Brass Target*.

1980 saw Hough try his hand at horror once again with the Canadian shocker *Incubus*, an early entry in the 'splatter' genre. *Triumph of a Man Called Horse*, another sequel in the saga of the Native Americans, followed before Hough returned to England and three episodes of the anthology series *Hammer House of Mystery and Suspense*: *Catch Me*, an identity-crisis melodrama set in Prague; *A Distant Scream*, an intriguing ghost story; and *Black Corrian*, a tale of two reporters caught up in the worlds of rock music, murder, and horror.

Returning to Walt Disney in 1984, Hough directed *The Black Arrow* for the Disney TV channel, before taking on UIP's high-tech, time-travelling version of *Biggles*, which would, sadly, feature Peter Cushing's last film appearance. His more recent work includes 1987's horror-thriller *American Gothic* and 1988's werewolf sequel, *Howling IV: The Original Nightmare*. In 1989 Hough became a director of the *Grade Company*, for whom he has helmed a series of TV movies based on the romantic novels of Barbara Cartland, including *A Hazard of Hearts*, *Dangerous Love* and *The Lady and the Highwayman*.

ALAN GIBSON



Director Alan Gibson gets a few points across during filming of *Dracula AD1972*; with, from above, Peter Cushing, Caroline Munro and Stephanie Beacham.

Canadian Alan Gibson was born in London, Ontario in 1938. He began his career as an actor with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation: in 1967 he came to England and trained in drama at the Bristol Old Vic. Thereafter, Gibson joined the BBC as a trainee director and in the two years between 1968 and 1970 was credited on over thirty productions, including episodes of the oil company drama, *The Troubadours*.

Impressed by Gibson's work for the BBC, Anthony Hinds offered him a chance to direct an episode of *Hammer's* first TV anthology series, *Journey to the Unknown*. His insistent, *Someone in a Crowd*, concerned itself with a television reporter who observes a number of recurring faces appearing at the scenes of major disasters. This was soon followed by his first feature film, *Hammer's Crescendo*.

A Jimmy Sangster psycho-thriller concerning the efforts of a great composer's widow to pair off Stefanie Powers with her crippled, heroin-

addicted son, it met with no great success upon its 1970 release.

Undeterred, Gibson moved on to Cinemas's melodrama, *Goodbye Gemini*. Judy Geeson headlined this lurid fantasy about a murderous brother and sister in swinging London. The events of his next film, *Hammer's Dracula AD 1972*, would take place against a similarly groovy backdrop.

Michael Carreras employed Gibson to update the exploits of the vampire Count in both this and its follow-up, *The Sellenite Rites of Dracula*. Slated at the time by critics and fans alike, the two modern-day *Draculas* were box-office failures but nevertheless proved Gibson's ability to handle elements of both Gothic drama and low budget action-adventure.

He appears to have worked briefly on 1977's *Crash!*, a curious blend of occult themes and car chases, for which the directorial credit would ultimately be claimed by schlock producer Charles Band. Gibson transferred his talents back to television and received deserved acclaim for his work on the award-winning *Churchill* and the *Generals*. 1980 saw Gibson co-script (with Jeremy Paul) and direct a BBC *Play For Today*, *The Filicide of Dominick Hyde*, in which Peter Firth portrayed a time-traveller from the future hopelessly ensnared in 1980s London. This 90-minute piece was popular enough to warrant a sequel, *Another Flip for Dominick*, two years later.

Also in 1980, Gibson directed two of the *Hammer House of Horror* television films. *The Silent Scream* starred Peter Cushing as an ageing Nazi doctor hiding out under the guise of a pet-shop keeper, whereas the weird and wonderful *Two Faces of Evil* was a tale of homicidal doppelgängers. Work in American television came in 1982 – a biopic of Golda Meyer, *A Woman Called Golda*, and an adaptation of Agatha Christie's *Witness for the Prosecution*. He returned to Canada in 1985 to make *Martin's Day*, a movie detailing the relationship between an escaped convict and the boy he kidnaps. Starring Richard Harris and Lindsay Wagner, it proved to be Gibson's last work. He died of cancer in 1987.

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